THE ACCURACY OF THE

NIV

KENNETH L. BARKER

In this redesigned edition, the head of the New International
Version translation project answers questions about the NIV's
handling of the original languages.

The author deals on a case-by-case basis with fifty Old Testament
and one hundred New Testament passages, explaining questioned
translations and defending the committee's word choices. In
the appendixes he responds to allegations that the committee
deliberately skewed passages to favor homosexuality or new age
philosophy, and that translators erred in declining to base their
work on the Textus Receptus.

The Accuracy of the NIV is the first of three volumes on the NIV.
The two other titles will be *The Making of the NIV* and *The Balance
of the NIV.*

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Contents

Abbreviations

All abbreviations used in this book are listed and explained below, except the books of the Bible. For these I have used quite standard abbreviations, which should be familiar to most, if not all, readers. The Bibliography provides complete information on the works referred to here.

AB	Anchor Bible
AGT	H. Alford, *Greek Testament*
ASV	American Standard Version
AV	Authorized Version (King James Version)
BAGD	Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the OT*
Bib. Sac.	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BKC	*Bible Knowledge Commentary* (J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, eds.)
c., ca.	about
CBT	Committee on Bible Translation (NIV)
cf.	compare
EBC	*Expositor's Bible Commentary* (F. E. Gaebelein, ed.)
ECB	*Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* (W. A. Elwell, ed.)
ed(s).	editor(s)
e.g.	for example
EGT	*Expositor's Greek Testament* (W. R. Nicoll, ed.)
et al.	and others
etc.	and so forth
ff.	following
GNB	Good News Bible
GTJ	*Grace Theological Journal*
IBC	*International Bible Commentary* (F. F. Bruce, ed.)
ICC	International Critical Commentary
i.e.	that is

ISBE	*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (G. W. Bromiley, ed.)
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JB	Jerusalem Bible
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KB	L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*
KJV	King James Version (Authorized Version)
LS	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*
LXX	Septuagint (Greek translation of OT)
n.	note
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NBC	*New Bible Commentary Revised* (D. Guthrie et al., eds.)
NCB	New Century Bible
n.d.	no date
NEB	New English Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary on the NT
NICOT	New International Commentary on the OT
NIDNTT	*New International Dictionary of NT Theology* (C. Brown, ed.)
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NIVSB	*The NIV Study Bible* (K. L. Barker, ed.)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NJBC	*New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (R. E. Brown et al., eds.)
NKJV	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
NTC	New Testament Commentary
OT	Old Testament
p(p).	page(s)
par.	paragraph
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SP	Scripture Press
s.v.	under the word/verse
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the NT* (G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds.)

TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the OT* (G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, eds.)
TOTC	Tyndale OT Commentaries
TR	Textus Receptus ("Received Text")
TWOT	*Theological Wordbook of the OT* (R. L. Harris et al., eds.)
UBS	United Bible Societies
v(v).	verse(s)
vol(s).	volume(s)
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WBC	*Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (C. F. Pfeiffer and E. F. Harrison, eds.)
WBE	*Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia* (C. F. Pfeiffer et al., eds.)
WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*

Introduction

When church historians describe the twentieth century, they will doubtless characterize it as, among other things, an era of Bible translation. This little book deals with the most successful of the major, standard committee-produced English Bible versions of this century. The NIV is called the most successful because, according to figures from the world's largest Bible distributors and the *Bookstore Journal* (reflecting actual sales in Christian retail stores in the United States and Canada), it is the best-selling English version of the Bible. In fact, according to the International Bible Society (IBS), as of January 1, 1996, there were over 100 million NIV Bibles and New Testaments in worldwide circulation and use. To my knowledge, no other Bible translation has ever surpassed that record in the same period of time since its release![1]

What has made the NIV so popular? On the divine side, God in His sovereignty, goodness, and grace has simply been pleased to bless, advance, and prosper the cause of His Word in this form. But God uses people. So on the human side, He has used the NIV translators, editors, and stylistic consultants to achieve the best balance among all the English Bible versions currently in existence. Although some may disagree, I believe that the NIV—when evaluated in all areas— will be found to be the most balanced translation available today. One of those areas of evaluation is covered in this book.

Some may consider many of the renderings discussed here as serious obstacles to using the NIV. The same "obstacles" apply

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1. Some have criticized Zondervan Publishing House for advertising that the NIV has replaced the KJV (AV) as the bestselling English Bible in the world today. They point out that one publisher's poll indicates the KJV is still number one and the NKJV is number two. It must be remembered, however, that the NIV figures are not based on *polls*, but on actual *sales*—obviously a more reliable source.

equally to using the other contemporary English versions. Most modern translations reflect the same basic meanings as the NIV text, though the specific words used to express those ideas may vary slightly.

Why begin with this book? What determined the selection of the particular passages discussed in it? The answer to the first question lies in some of the positions the Lord has allowed me to hold through the years: an NIV translator, secretary of the NIV Committee on Bible Translation (CBT), executive secretary of CBT, general editor of *The NIV Study Bible*, editor of *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, coeditor of *The NIV Bible Commentary*, and now executive director of the NIV Translation Center (a ministry of IBS, the sponsor of the NIV and the holder of its copyright). Because of these roles, most of the NIV-related letters from people around the world have been turned over to me for response—several thousand of them altogether. It is gratifying to be able to report that the vast majority of these letters from people everywhere (probably at least 90 percent of them) have been positive, essentially thanking us for the NIV. Some letters have presented questions and/or criticisms concerning the NIV. Most of these have typically followed the pattern: Why did you translate [a certain verse] the way you did? Since most of the questions were of this type, it seemed appropriate to start with a book discussing these questioned NIV renderings.

The second question (about how selections were made) has several answers. Most of the passages were selected from the letters mentioned above. Others were gleaned from reviews of the NIV. Still others came from books critical of the NIV, such as *Accuracy of Translation and the New International Version* by Robert P. Martin and *The NIV Reconsidered* by Earl D. Radmacher and Zane C. Hodges. Of the several anti-NIV books, booklets, pamphlets, and tracts (and, in one case, even a comic book!), these two are easily the best and are written at a higher level than the others. Most of the anti-NIV literature is written at such a low level (usually as a diatribe) that it should not be dignified with a response. For example, most such literature is chock-full of ad hominem arguments, invective, and vituperative remarks. Such material also frequently assumes what must be proved (e.g., that translators should use only the New Testa-

ment Greek manuscripts available to the KJV translators because they are the only valid ones)—but more about all that later.

I do not interact with all the contents of the books by Martin and Radmacher–Hodges. There are several reasons for this. First, they apparently have other agendas than providing a completely unbiased, objective evaluation of the NIV.

Radmacher, for instance, attempts to show the superiority of the NKJV over the NIV: "Time after time . . . we have seen that the New King James Version is superior to the New International Version" (p. 132). Hodges' agenda is to promote the Majority Text over the reasoned eclectic approach of the NIV translators of the Greek New Testament (pp. 133–44, 150–52).

Martin reveals his bias in the subtitle: "The Primary Criterion in Evaluating Bible Versions." That primary criterion, according to him (similarly Radmacher), is the formal equivalence ("literal") approach to translation. If a translation follows the formal equivalence method, it is accurate; if it does not, it is not. With such a view, one could have predicted that he would prefer the KJV and the ASV and, similarly, that Radmacher would prefer the KJV and the NKJV.

The most glaring weakness of both works is that faithfulness and accuracy are measured too much in terms of the original or source language. Many—perhaps most—translators and linguists today think the greatest faithfulness and accuracy are attained when they are as true to the target or receptor language (in our case, English) as they are to the source language (in this instance, the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek of the Bible). To Martin's credit, he does not fault the NIV for not using only the Greek manuscripts that lie behind the KJV. (For a critique of his book, see Bob Sheehan, "Criticisms of the NIV"—listed in the Bibliography. For a review and evaluation of both Martin's book and Radmacher and Hodges' book, see Michael W. Holmes, "Book Reviews.")

Second, many of their criticisms apply equally to the other English versions as well, including the ones they favor. There is no need to respond to such criticisms.

Third, many of their complaints belong in the category of nitpicking. An illustration of this is the frequency with which one can derive their preferred sense from the NIV text as it stands.

Another good example of such nitpicking is Martin's list of alleged cases of paraphrasing in the NIV. I decided to examine his first four examples (p. 63). In Matthew 1:25 he prefers "he knew her not," whereas the NIV has "he had no union with her." The latter is not a paraphrase, for included in the semantic range of *ginōskō* (the Greek verb used here) is the sense "to know/experience in a sexual union." It is a euphemism for sexual relations (BAGD, p. 161, 5). The job of any good translator is to survey the semantic possibilities of an original language word in the Hebrew or Greek lexicons and select the most appropriate nuance for a given context. That is all we have done in Matthew 1:25.

In Matthew 2:10 Martin wants "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy," whereas the NIV reads "they were overjoyed." There is no ultimate difference in meaning between his fuller (but more cumbersome and unnatural for English idiom) expression and the NIV's more natural and idiomatic "they were *overjoyed*." In Matthew 6:14 he thinks it should be "if you forgive men their trespasses," whereas the NIV has "if you forgive men when they sin against you." Yet "trespass" is defined in an English dictionary as "the act of trespassing," which in turn is defined as "committing an offense, sin, or transgression against another." Finally, in Matthew 8:25 Martin prefers "we perish," whereas the NIV translates "we're going to drown." Yet the Greek verb *apollymi* is used "of disaster that the stormy sea brings to the seafarer" (BAGD, p. 95, 2, a, *a*). Words must be *contextually* nuanced; they take on *specific* meaning only in *context*. Similar answers could be given to most of Martin's remaining so-called examples of paraphrasing and also to Radmacher's.

Fourth, certain NIV renderings are currently being reviewed by our translation committee (CBT). Obviously, it would be imprudent for me to respond fully to inquiries about such passages until the review process is completed and the results are made known.

It makes no sense to write a whole book against another English Bible version. One reason is that no translation—whether KJV/NKJV, ASV/NASB, RSV/NRSV (or NIV!)—is bad enough to deserve an entire volume against it. Furthermore, if one were to remove all instances of questionable interpretations, nitpicking, ad hominem, hidden agendas, begging the question, inferior tex-

tual readings (particularly in the Greek New Testament), and arguing in a circle from books against a certain Bible version, they would quickly become very small booklets or even pamphlets.

Why did it become necessary to produce this book about the NIV? I was reluctant to embark on such a course. First, I have always felt that God's Word (including the NIV translation of it) can stand on its own merits and so does not need to be defended.

Second, many of the works written against the NIV do not merit a response. Essentially, there are two broad approaches one can take in evaluating a new translation like the NIV. One is to provide a serious, scholarly critique, as is done by Martin and Radmacher–Hodges (though they have other agendas and are not totally objective). The other is to make meaningless comparisons with the KJV (as if the Bible originated in 1611), completely overlooking the different readings in the ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and also completely ignoring the more refined lexical or semantic understandings we now have through increased knowledge and further study. Unfortunately, much of the current material in this field opts for the latter approach. *Which Bible?*, edited by David Otis Fuller, is all too typical of the kind of deceptive, though well-intended, popular writing that does more harm than good—in this case by preying on the ignorance of many Bible-believing Christians in technical matters. Simply stated, such writing is not worth the investment of time and effort to refute. Those who do wish to read refutations of that kind of material may consult the articles from *Baptist Biblical Heritage* in the Bibliography.

Third, I do not wish to become embroiled in a controversy that makes mountains out of molehills and contributes to further divisions among God's people individually and in the church corporately. Since Evangelicals are united on the issues that matter most, we need to recognize who our real theological, moral, and spiritual enemies are and unite in the kind of spiritual warfare the great apostle speaks of in Ephesians 6:10–20. Instead, I fear that many well-meaning Christians are allowing themselves to be used as tools of Satan to do his dirty work of sowing seeds of discord among God's people (Prov. 6:14–15, 19).

Bible translators (including this one) are sometimes the recipients of hate mail from a few who maintain that the only true, pure form of God's Word is the KJV. Such a view has several fallacies. It implies that knowledge—at least in the field of Bible translation—ceased in 1611. It also creates a theological problem, for it implies that the sovereign, loving, gracious God has deprived the vast majority of the world's people-groups of the only true, pure form of His Word. What about the millions who lived before 1611? Did they not have access to an acceptable form of God's Word? What about the hundreds of millions who have lived since 1611 and the billions living today who have not had and do not have access to the KJV? Most of the world's peoples do not know, read, or speak English; so even if they had the KJV, it would not profit them. The KJV-only notion calls into question the tireless efforts of Wycliffe Bible Translators and other translators (such as those with United Bible Societies and International Bible Society) who have translated God's Word into hundreds of languages and have done so neither from the KJV nor from the New Testament Greek text it is based on.

Such a narrow view of what constitutes God's Word cannot be correct, then, for it would logically mean that God has deprived the majority of the earth's population of the only valid form (translation) of His Word. Whether people follow the Textus Receptus, the Majority Text, or an eclectic text, or use *any* of the major, standard translations, they will still arrive at the same biblical theology. These issues may affect our understanding of a particular verse, but they will not alter Christian doctrine one whit. Such secondary matters are not worth splitting churches over. So it was only after the appearance and influence of the books by Martin and Radmacher–Hodges that I was finally persuaded to write this book, with the prayer that it will not contribute to further divisions, confusion, and misunderstanding.

Many selected passages below involve interpretative matters. Translation without interpretation is an absolute impossibility, for at every turn the translator is faced with interpretative decisions in different manuscript readings, grammar, syntax, the specific semantic possibilities of a Hebrew or Greek word for a given context, English idiom, and the like. For example, should

a particular occurrence of the Hebrew word *'ereṣ* be contextually nuanced as "earth," "land," or something else? (For the lexical possibilities, see BDB, pp. 75–76.) In the very act of deciding, the translator has interpreted. Sheehan correctly states that the "idea of a non-interpretive translation is a mirage."[2]

In answering questions about various Bible passages in the NIV, I will attempt to avoid excessive duplication of treatments in other works. For example, the rationale for many NIV renderings has already been delineated in such books as *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (from International Bible Society) and *Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations of the New Testament* by Philip W. Comfort.

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2. Bob Sheehan, *Which Version Now?* (Sussex, England: Carey Publications, n.d.), 21.

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Questions on the Old Testament

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (NIV).

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth (NRSV).

In the beginning, when God created the universe (GNB).

When God began to create the heavens and the earth (REB, *footnote*).

Why was this verse not translated as a subordinate or dependent clause, as in such translations as the *New Revised Standard Version, Good News Bible*, and *Revised English Bible* (footnote)?

We understood 1:1 and 2:1 to be parallel, 1:1 functioning as a general summary statement introducing the creation story and 2:1 as a summary statement concluding the same. The details of the account of the six days of creative activity (1:2–31) are sandwiched between the two summary statements.[1]

Genesis 2:2, 8, 19

By the seventh day God had finished the work . . . (v. 2).

Now the LORD God had planted a garden . . . (v. 8).

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field . . . (v. 19).

1. See, further, Edward J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964), 1–14.

Why did you analyze the Hebrew for "had finished," "had planted," and "had formed" as pluperfect, or past perfect (had), instead of simple past?

Some commentators suggest that the Old Testament presents two contradictory creation accounts in (1) Genesis 1:1–2:3 and (2) 2:4ff. Certain critics of the NIV claim the translators rendered the Hebrew tenses incorrectly in 2:8, 19 to remove the chronological discrepancies. However, Genesis 1 and 2 are not two creation narratives; rather, Genesis 1:1–2:3 is the creation account and 2:4ff. is the story of what happened to that creation, focusing on Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.[2]

Regarding the translation of verb tense, the Hebrew "imperfect consecutive" (most commonly a past act succeeding a previous one either temporally or logically) in these verses is now more accurately classified as the "preterite." The preterite can be translated as a pluperfect (past perfect)—as in Akkadian.[3] Syntactically (according to grammatical relationship), the Hebrew verbs in these (and other) verses can be translated as either simple past or past perfect. We chose the usage (past perfect) that made the most sense in the *context*, as all exegetes and translators should do. Hebrew narratives are not always sequential or chronological; like other good literature, they occasionally use flashbacks. The past perfect makes such flashbacks or "dischronologizations" clear to the reader.[4]

To illustrate, in Genesis 2:19 the Lord had to have formed the animals or living creatures before He could bring them to the man to name (see also the order in 1:24–28). Similarly, with respect to Genesis 12:1, Acts 7:2–4 plainly indicates that Abraham's call came in Ur, not Haran.[5]

2. See K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: InterVarsity, 1966), 116–19; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 76, 117–18.

3. Cf. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 466–78, 544–47, 552–53.

4. See W. J. Martin, "'Dischronologized' Narrative in the Old Testament," *Congress Volume: Rome 1968* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 179–86.

5. Cf. Gen. 15:7; Neh. 9:7. For other instances of past perfect functions of this tense-form, see Exod. 11:1; 1 Kings 9:14; Neh. 2:9; Isa. 38:21–22; Zech. 7:2; and the works above by Martin, Waltke and O'Connor, and Kitchen.

Genesis 2:4

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. . . .

Why did you render the sacred Tetragrammaton as "the LORD," instead of using "Yahweh" or "Jehovah" to transliterate God's personal name *(YHWH)*?

First, the *Preface* to the NIV explains the NIV's rendering of the Tetragrammaton *YHWH* as "LORD" in capital and small capital letters to distinguish it from *Adonai,* another Hebrew word rendered "Lord," but in small letters. When the two names stand together, they are translated "Sovereign LORD." Second, the translators were not unanimous on how *YHWH* should be pronounced. Third, the NIV follows the tradition of most major, standard English Bible versions from the KJV on in rendering the name as "the LORD." Fourth, the translation "the Lord" has a very ancient precedent in the Greek Septuagint (c. 200 B.C.), where *YHWH* is rendered *kyrios* ("the Lord"). Fifth, the Greek NT also translates it as *kyrios* ("the Lord"). Sixth, the majority of the NIV's Committee on Bible Translation did not feel that the Christian public at large was familiar enough with the name *Yahweh* to use it in an English translation of the Bible. Seventh, the NIV is periodically under review, and it is still possible that, as a result of the review process, the majority may approve the change to Yahweh at some point in the future.[6]

Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said, ". . . Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Does the last part of the verse teach that the woman's desire would be to dominate or control her husband?

6. See the *NIV Study Bible* notes on Gen. 2:4; Exod. 3:14–15; 6:6; Deut. 28:58; and my explanation in chapter 9 in *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (International Bible Society, Colorado Springs, Colo.) for why YHWH *Sabaoth* ("the LORD of hosts" in the KJV) is translated "the LORD Almighty."

This view, proposed by Susan T. Foh, is possible, but not probable.[7] Significantly no Hebrew dictionaries suggest such a connotation for *těšûqâ* (the Hebrew for "desire").[8] Thus the lexical data seem to militate against her view. Henri Blocher gives the best brief response to Foh's contention.[9] He interacts with her argumentation, finds it wanting, and concludes in favor of the view(s) found in most commentaries (and in the *NIVSB*, n. on Gen. 3:16). At this time it seems wise to hold that *těšûqâ* (with the preposition *'el*) means a "desire for" someone or something in all three of its occurrences (Gen. 3:16; 4:7; Song 7:10). Besides, the NIV is open to her understanding.[10]

Genesis 4:1

She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man."

Why does the NIV read "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man" instead of "I have gotten/acquired a man from the LORD"?

There are two problems here. The first is how the Hebrew preposition *with ('ēt)* is used. BDB, the main Hebrew dictionary, lists this occurrence of the word under the semantic category, "with for the purpose of help"; hence, "With the help of."[11]

7. Susan T. Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire?" *WTJ* 37 (Spring 1975): 376–83.

8. See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907); Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958); William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971); R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *TWOT* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), s.v.

9. Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning*, trans. David G. Preston (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1984), 181–82.

10. See also Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3* (London: Banner of Truth, 1966), 126–29; Irvin A. Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man: Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered," *GTJ* 7 (Fall 1986): 203–12.

11. BDB, 85–86; Preuss (Horst Dietrich Preuss, "'ēt; 'im," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977–90], vol. 1, 450) concurs, as do Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1976), par. 345, and Waltke and O'Connor, 195.

This understanding is further supported by the LXX, *dia tou theou* ("through God").

The second problem is how the Hebrew verb *qānîtî* (*from qānâ*, "brought forth" in NIV) is used. KB, a Hebrew dictionary, correctly lists this occurrence under the homonym II *qnh*, "create, produce"[12] (see also Gen. 14:19, 22).

Genesis 4:8

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field."

Why does the NIV, in distinction from other translations, have the words, "Let's go out to the field"?

The Hebrew formula *('āmar lĕ)* reflected in "now Cain *said to* his brother Abel" is almost always followed by a direct quotation. The KJV, in an attempt to solve the problem, translates, "And Cain talked with Abel his brother" (similarly the NKJV); the NASB expresses it with "And Cain told Abel his brother." All these interpretations seem forced.[13] There is strong textual support for such a quotation: the LXX, Syriac Peshitta, Latin Vulgate, and Samaritan Pentateuch; compare also the Jerusalem and Pseudo-Jonathan Targums (Aramaic).

Genesis 6:4

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days . . . (NIV).
There were giants in the earth in those days . . . (KJV).

Why transliterate the Hebrew word *nephilim* instead of translating it as "giants" (KJV)?

The KJV interpretation originated with the LXX, which read *gigantes* ("giants"). While it is true that the *nephilim* were people

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12. KB indicates that the Ugaritic *qny* is etymologically cognate. Its definitions include "bring forth, create."

13. E. A. Speiser, *AB: Genesis* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 30–31, and Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 1:25, are among the many commentators who agree with the NIV rendering or with something similar.

of great size and strength (Num. 13:31–33), the Hebrew word itself does not mean "giants." Rather, it means "fallen ones." As the *NIVSB* (n. on 6:4) explains: "In men's eyes they were 'the heroes of old, men of renown,' but in God's eyes they were sinners ('fallen ones') ripe for judgment."

Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7 (Galatians 3:16)

The LORD *. . . said, "To your offspring I will give this land"* (12:7).

All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever (13:15).

The LORD *. . . promised me on oath, saying, "To your offspring I will give this land"* . . . (24:7).

(The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed . . . [Gal. 3:16].)

Since the footnote in Galatians 3:16 refers the reader to these verses in Genesis, why did you use "offspring" in Genesis and "seed" in Galatians?

Both the Hebrew and Greek words for "seed, offspring" (*zera'* and *sperma* respectively) are open to either a collective or an individual nuance. "Seed" is proper in Galatians because of Paul's stress on the individual sense. However, the NIV translators believed that in Genesis the term had a more generic, collective, and comprehensive scope, which Paul then applied to the ultimate Seed, Christ, as the final, complete fulfillment.

Thus the NIV used "offspring" in Genesis, while providing "seed" in the footnote to help the reader make the connection. It is a case of generic, typological prophecy being progressively fulfilled.[14]

14. For somewhat technical discussions of the terms involved, see Preuss, *"zera',"* in *TDOT*, 4:151–62, and Siegfried Schulz, *"Sperma,"* in *TDNT*, eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76), 7:545–47. For simpler and briefer treatments of the concept involved, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 56, 154, 230–31, as well as my chapter, "The Scope and Center of Old and New Testament Theology and Hope," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, eds. Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 323–28.

Genesis 37:35

"No," he said, "in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son. . . ."

Why was the Hebrew *šĕʾōl* (Sheol) translated "grave" here and often elsewhere in the Old Testament?

The majority of the Committee on Bible Translation were convinced that most occurrences of Sheol mean "grave." Where there was doubt, we used "death," "depths," or something similar. In all instances, we put Sheol in a footnote. One of several reasons for our conclusion is the fact that Sheol is often used synonymously with Hebrew *qeber* ("grave").[15]

Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder . . . (NIV).
Thou shalt not kill . . . (KJV).

Why did you translate the Hebrew verb as "murder" instead of "kill" (KJV)?

Hebrew has several words for the idea of killing: to execute, to kill in war, to slaughter a sacrificial animal, to kill in general, and so on. But the one used here *(rāṣaḥ)* very clearly means "to commit murder" (though occasionally it is used of manslaughter). The major Hebrew lexicon or dictionary (BDB) defines the word as meaning to "murder" or to "slay" and gives a long list of references where the verb has that meaning.[16]

Exodus 22:25

If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a money-lender; charge him no interest.

15. Our complete rationale was given by R. Laird Harris, "Why Hebrew *Shĕʾōl* Was Translated 'Grave,'" in *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker (Colorado Springs: IBS), 58–71, 158.
16. BDB, 953–54.

Which is correct here, the text ("interest") or the footnote ("excessive interest")?

Scholars differ in their understanding of the various contexts in which the Hebrew terms for interest and usury occur. What appears to be forbidden in Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:35–37, and Deuteronomy 23:19 is interest on loans to the poor and needy. Deuteronomy 23:20 allows an Israelite to "charge a foreigner interest." We use "excessive interest" in Ezekiel 18:8, and in other places, because there it stands in synonymous parallelism with usury, which means "exorbitant interest." So then, Ezekiel did not condemn interest per se but usury. Even here, however, as can be seen from the footnote in the NIV, we recognize "interest" alone as a possible alternative translation.

Leviticus 13:2

> *When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a bright spot on his skin that may become an infectious skin disease, he must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest . . .* (NIV).
>
> *When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy . . .* (KJV).

Why was the Hebrew not translated "leprosy," as in the KJV, instead of "infectious skin disease"?

The NIV footnote briefly gives the answer: "Traditionally *leprosy;* the Hebrew word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy." A fuller explanation appears in the *NIVSB* study note:[17]

The symptoms described, and the fact that they may rapidly change (vv. 6, 26–27, 32–37), show that the disease was not true leprosy (Hansen's disease). They apply also to a number of other

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17. See further Dr. S. G. Browne, O. B. E., "'Leprosy' in the New English Bible," *The Bible Translator* 22 (1971): 45ff.; R. Laird Harris, "Leviticus," in *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 2:576–77; Kenneth V. Mull and Carolyn Sandquist Mull, "Biblical Leprosy—Is It Really?" *Bible Review* 8 (April 1992): 32–39, 62.

diseases, as well as to rather harmless skin eruptions. The Hebrew word translated "infectious skin disease" can also mean "mildew" (v. 47; 14:34; and especially 14:57).

Joshua 4:9

Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan . . . (NIV).

And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan . . . (KJV).

Why was this verse rendered to imply that Joshua did not set up a second pile of stones in the Jordan?

While it is possible to translate the opening words as "Joshua also set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan" (see the alternative rendering in the NIV footnote), it seems preferable to translate them as above. The Hebrew will allow either, but verse 20 seems to support the latter. Thus the NIV rendering gives greater unity, harmony, and continuity to the chapter. Some previous translators may have been misled by the way the narrator kept switching back and forth in his telling of the story. At this point he was referring to piling up the stones that had been previously gathered to memorialize the miraculous crossing of the Jordan at Gilgal (Josh. 4:4–8).

1 Samuel 15:32

Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag. . . ." Agag came to him confidently . . . (NIV).

Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag . . . And Agag came unto him delicately . . . (KJV).

Why was the Hebrew not translated "delicately," as in the KJV?

The Hebrew word *m'dnt* expresses "the manner in which Agag came. This might be confidently or defiantly or cringingly or cowardly. It is impossible to determine which is intended by the Hebrew word."[18] For this reason, we put one possibility in

18. H. P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel,* ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1977), 142.

the text ("Agag came to him confidently, thinking") and another in the footnote ("Agag came to him trembling, yet thinking").

1 Samuel 15:33

And Samuel put Agag to death . . . (NIV).
And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces . . . (KJV).

Why was the Hebrew not translated "cut (or hewed) to pieces," as in the KJV and some other translations? The NIV rendering seems tame compared to these others.

The Hebrew verb occurs only here, and its meaning must be determined from the context and the ancient versions. Since its specific meaning is uncertain, we preferred to be more general by rendering it "put to death." The Greek Septuagint (LXX) also is not specific and translates it more generally "slew or killed."

2 Samuel 21:19

In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite. . . .

(So David triumphed over the Philistine . . . he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword [1 Sam. 17:50–51]).

Why did you translate this verse in a way that conflicts with 1 Samuel 17:50–51?

This is the way the Hebrew text reads in 2 Samuel 21:19. However, a careful study of the original (see the NIV footnote as well as the *NIVSB* study note) suggests that the reading both here and in 1 Chronicles 20:5 originally was either "Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath" or "Elhanan son of Jair the Bethlehemite killed the brother of Goliath." Both passages indicate "that David slew Goliath and Elhanan slew the brother of Goliath."[19]

19. Merrill F. Unger, *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951), 296–97.

1 Kings 22:38

They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed) . . . (NIV).

And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria . . . and they washed his armour . . . (KJV).

Why do you have the translation "where the prostitutes bathed" instead of the KJV's rendering "and they washed his armour"?

Our general policy was to prefer the Hebrew text as it stands, unless there were persuasive reasons for not doing so. With a slight change in the Hebrew for "prostitutes," the word could mean "armor" or "weapons"; however, we chose the former as the preferable translation and gave the alternative in the NIV footnote.

Job 1:21

and said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart . . ." (NIV).

And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither . . . (KJV).

Why translate the Hebrew "naked I will depart" instead of "naked I will return thither" (there)?

First, the Hebrew text is not clear. What "there" refers to is certainly debatable. Some have understood "there" as referring to the "mother's womb."[20] The suggestion that "thither," or

20. Earl D. Radmacher and Zane C. Hodges, *The NIV Reconsidered* (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1980), 34–35, following Craigie (Peter C. Craigie, "The *New International Version:* A Review Article," *JETS* 21 [September 1978]: 253), assume that "there" refers to "mother's womb" and lament this departure from the "clear meaning of the text." Radmacher in his use of Craigie is not completely fair. In spite of a few "quibbles" that "may reflect more negatively upon the reviewer than upon the NIV" (Craigie, 253), Craigie actually praises the NIV very highly: "The NIV renditions of Hebrew poetry are exceptionally well done . . . the poetry alone should be sufficient reason to switch to the NIV" (p. 254); "The OT NIV is a magnificent monument to Biblical scholarship. This is scholarship at its best, directed toward a practical end—

there, "refers to Mother Earth as man's origin and goal finds no support in Scripture. The thought is as general as Ecclesiastes 5:15 or 1 Timothy 6:7."[21]

Second, the alternative rendering, "will return there," is provided in a footnote. Most members of the Committee on Bible Translation (including myself) regard the footnotes as an important part of the NIV text.

Job 9:30

Even if I washed myself with soap . . . (NIV).

If I wash myself with snow water . . . (NKJV).

Why translate the Hebrew "soap" instead of "snow water," as in the NKJV?

"Most modern commentators . . . translate *šeleg* as 'soapwort' rather than as 'snow.' Pope identifies soapwort as soap manufactured from the root of the plant *Leontopatelon*."[22] The related words in the Mishna *('ešlāg)* and the Gemara *(šalgā')* support the translation as soap; so does the Akkadian *ašlāku*.[23]

Job 26:12

By his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces (NIV).

By his understanding he smiteth through the proud (KJV).

Why did you transliterate the Hebrew as "Rahab" instead of translating it as "the proud," as in the KJV?

The Hebrew word can be translated as a common noun, "the proud" (KJV), or a proper noun, "Rahab" (NIV). Rahab is a name

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namely, the clarification of the Biblical text through careful translation for present and future generations of English-speaking peoples" (p. 254).

21. Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1976), 88.

22. John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 178, n. 5.

23. Hartley, p. 178, n. 5; similarly, Elmer B. Smick, "Job," in *EBC* (1988), 4:914, n. 30.

for a Canaanite sea monster and is sometimes symbolic of Egypt. Of course, Job's use of that mythological term in no way suggests that he believed in the actual existence of such a creature. Rather, the term points polemically to God's supremacy as the only God—the all-powerful One, who can conquer all alleged pagan gods and creatures such as Rahab.

Psalm 2:7

Today I have become your Father (NIV).
This day have I begotten thee (KJV).

Why did you translate the Hebrew "today I have become your Father" instead of "this day I have begotten thee," as essentially in the KJV? Does this mean that Jesus was not the Father's Son from all eternity?

"In the ancient Near East the relationship between a great king and one of his subject kings . . . was expressed not only by the words 'lord' and 'servant' but also by 'father' and 'son.' The Davidic king was the Lord's 'servant' and his 'son' (2 Sam. 7:5, 14)."[24] Accordingly most scholars today (including conservative-Evangelical ones) believe that the Hebrew of Psalm 2:7 and the Greek of Acts 13:33 and Hebrews 1:5, 5:5 are best translated "today I have become your Father" (see 2 Sam. 7:14). Although these words are applied to Christ's resurrection, ascension, glorification, and present ministry, it is obvious from the New Testament that God was already Jesus' Father. So these words must be understood in the sense of Romans 1:3–4: "his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead." He was already God's Son, but He was shown to be God's powerful Son by His resurrection and all that followed.

24. *NIVSB*, n. on Ps. 2:7.

Psalm 3:7

Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked (NIV).

For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheekbone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly (KJV).

Why did you translate the Hebrew "strike" and "break" (imperatives) instead of "thou hast smitten" and "thou hast broken" (declaratives), as in the KJV? Does the Hebrew not have the perfect tense of the verb here? Do the imperatives not detract from God's deliverance?

Many—probably most—Hebrew scholars today recognize the validity of a "precative" perfect to express a petition in prayer. In this syntactical use of the perfect, the speaker presents a request and expects it to be granted.[25] Moses Buttenwieser set forth the rule that the precative perfect is found alternating with the imperfect or the imperative; it is by this outward sign that the precative perfect may be identified. Significantly, the two perfects ("strike" and "break") in Psalm 3:7 are preceded by two imperatives ("arise" and "deliver"), showing that this is the petition section of the psalm. The fact that God has delivered His people and does deliver them is abundantly clear from numerous other verses in both the Old Testament (including the very next verse of this psalm) and the New Testament.

Psalm 7:11–12

God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day. If he does not relent, he will sharpen his sword . . . (NIV).

God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword . . . (KJV).

Who is the subject of the first verb in verse 12? The KJV implies that a wicked person is the subject.

25. For details, see Moses Buttenwieser, *The Psalms Chronologically Treated with a New Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1938), 18–25; Waltke and O'Connor, 494–95.

The Hebrew syntax of Psalm 7:12 is somewhat uncertain. If the subject is a wicked man, it should be translated: "If a man does not repent, he (God) will sharpen his sword" (see the alternative translation in the NIV footnote). If the subject is God, it should be rendered: "If he (God) does not relent, he (God) will sharpen his sword" (as in the NIV main text). Also, if God is the subject, "relent" is the better translation since God does not "repent" (or "change his mind"; see 1 Sam. 15:29). The Hebrew verb can mean either "repent" or "relent." When God is the subject, the latter rendering seems more appropriate.

Psalm 8:5

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings . . . (NIV).

For thou hast made them a little lower than the angels . . . (KJV).

Why did you translate Elohim "heavenly beings" instead of "angels," as in the KJV?

Our translation agrees with the KJV ("heavenly beings" = "angels") and with the quotation in Hebrews 2:7. Probably most Hebrew scholars, however, believe that *Elohim* here should be given its normal translation, "God" (see the NIV footnote). The verse would then be saying that man stands right next to God in the created order (compare Ps. 8:5–8 with Gen. 1:26–28).[26]

Psalm 16:10

Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. . . (NIV).

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption . . . (KJV).

Why did you translate the Hebrew "Sheol" by the word *grave*? Does this mean that you do not believe that Jesus' soul or spirit went to hell or Hades (Acts 2:27)?

26. For a defense of this position and the messianic significance of the passage, see Donald R. Glenn, "Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2: A Case Study in Biblical Hermeneutics and Biblical Theology," in *Walvoord: A Tribute*, ed. Donald K. Campbell (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 39–51.

First, it must be observed, in fairness to the NIV, that it provides a footnote with Sheol in Psalm 16:10, thus leaving interpreters free to nuance that Hebrew term however they choose.[27] Second, Sheol frequently occurs in synonymous parallelism with Hebrew *qeber*, which clearly means "grave."[28] Third, more recent studies support the NIV.[29] Fourth, Franklin Johnson long ago pointed the way to the correct understanding of the relationship between the Old and New Testament passages:

> It refers to David, in a certain sense; but it flows far beyond him in the verses which Peter quotes. Observe how naturally the words fit the Messiah, while only by an unnatural interpretation . . . can they be limited to the psalmist, or even applied to him in a literal sense. The flesh dwelling in safety in the tomb; the soul not left to sheol, but brought back; the holy one not allowed to see the pit of corruption; the path of life shown to him; and finally his ascension to the right hand of God; all these expressions point to Christ, and they can have had only an imperfect and typical fulfillment in David, "who died and was buried," who "saw the pit," and who "ascended not into the heavens." The typical character of the passage is clearly indicated by the overflow of its language from the type to the antitype.[30]

This "overflow" makes it a typical-*prophetical* messianic psalm. And because of this "overflow" element in the psalm, Peter is quite correct when he says that David "spoke of the resurrection of Christ"—as far as the literal and full sense is concerned or as far as the ultimate divine intention is concerned. But this does not mean that the words did not also apply to David. There is no need to insist that the psalm must apply ex-

27. Radmacher begins his criticism: "The NIV errs grievously in its treatment of this famous Messianic text" (*NIV Reconsidered*, 49). He goes on to take Harris to task for defending the NIV rendering (see the treatment of Gen. 37:35 above).

28. Radmacher does not even attempt to refute Harris's cogent arguments about synonymous parallelism.

29. See, in particular, Wayne Grudem, "He Did Not Descend into Hell," *JETS* 34 (March 1991): 103–13. Scaer does not succeed in his more theological attempt to overturn Grudem's more exegetical evidence (David P. Scaer, "He Did Descend to Hell," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35 [March 1992]: 91–99).

30. Franklin Johnson, *The Quotations of the New Testament from the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1896), 323.

clusively to *either* David *or* Christ. It can just as easily apply to *both* David *and* Christ along the lines traced above.[31]

Psalm 19:7

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul . . . (NIV).

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul . . . (KJV).

Why did you translate the Hebrew "reviving the soul" instead of "converting the soul" (KJV)?

The emphasis in this context is on the effect of God's Law in the life of a believer like David (see vv. 7–14). So the Hebrew verb should be rendered "reviving" or "restoring" (as in Ps. 23:3).

Psalm 51:5

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Did the doctrine of inherited original sin influence your rendering of this verse?

We were not attempting to represent a particular theological viewpoint; rather, we were trying to express the meaning of the verse clearly in contemporary English idiom. Although the NIV rendering of the verse may be open to two or three possible interpretations, it basically teaches the same truth as Genesis 8:21; Psalm 58:3; Ephesians 2:3.

Psalm 68:18

When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men . . . (Ps. 68:18).

31. Cf., more recently, John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 26:113–14. The most comprehensive analysis is that of Paul A. Birmingham, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 16" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980). On pp. 59–60, 84, n. 114, Birmingham also refutes Kaiser's view of Hebrew *hāsîd* as "the favorite one" (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, 32–35).

When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men (Eph. 4:8).

How can you reconcile your rendering of this verse with Paul's quotation in Ephesians 4:8? They seem to conflict: "received gifts from men" versus "gave gifts to men."

Psalm 68:18 speaks of God's triumphant ascension to His throne in the temple at Jerusalem. In Ephesians 4:8 Paul applies this to Christ's triumphal ascension into heaven. Where the psalm states further that God "received gifts from men," Paul apparently follows certain rabbinic interpretations current in his day that read the Hebrew preposition for "from" in the sense of "to" (a meaning it often has) and the verb for "received" in the sense of "took and gave" (a meaning it sometimes has). See the *NIVSB* n. on Ephesians 4:8.

Psalm 100:3

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture (NIV).

Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture (KJV).

Why did you translate the Hebrew "and we are his" instead of the familiar "and not we ourselves"?

The problem here concerns the correct reading of the Hebrew text. The majority of our committee favored "and we are his," which seems to fit better with what follows in the verse. We do, however, offer "and not we ourselves" as an alternative translation in the footnote.

Psalm 119:65

Do good to your servant according to your word, O LORD.

Why did you translate the perfect tense of the Hebrew verb "Do good" instead of "You have done good"?

Since this verse is in a context of prayer (see the preceding and following verses), our committee felt it was best to understand the Hebrew verb as a "precative" perfect. While the perfect tense frequently represents a past action, a precative connotation means the verb form expresses a wish or request. See the treatment of Psalm 3:7 above.

Psalm 138:2

For you have exalted above all things your name and your word (NIV).

For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name (KJV).

Why does the NIV exalt God's name and Word above all things and the KJV exalt God's Word above His name?

The Hebrew at the end of the verse is unclear in its syntax and thus difficult to translate. It can be translated the way the KJV has it, or it can be rendered as it is in the NIV. Since either rendering is possible (and even one or two others!), we chose ours on theological grounds. It is inconceivable that God would exalt His Word above His name which, in Hebrew usage, represents one's very person and character. The KJV choice is actually saying that God has exalted His Word above His very own person, essence, and character ("name"). This is theologically inconceivable.[32]

Proverbs 3:6

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight (NIV).

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths (KJV).

Why did you translate "he will make your paths straight" instead of "he will direct your paths"? Isn't this a verse about

32. The NIV analysis is supported by Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, WBC, ed. D. A. Hubbard and G. W. Barker (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983), 21:243–44, n. 2a.

God's guidance in revealing His will as to where He wants us to go and what He wants us to do?

The verse does not relate primarily to God's guidance or direction in our lives; the kjv would be somewhat clearer if it said, "he shall make thy paths direct." The main point of the Hebrew is that if we trust in the Lord and in His wisdom instead of our own understanding and if we fully acknowledge Him in our lives, He will "make our paths (or conduct or way of life) straight (or smooth or level)"—the predominant meaning of the Hebrew verb used here. That is to say, He will remove obstacles and will enable us to make good progress, thus bringing us straight to His appointed goal for us, namely, wise living. The context, of course, also supports this view. The path of wisdom generally has greater benefits (such as a smoother and happier road in life) than that of folly. The kjv rendering, then, is somewhat misleading at this point, though it is at least possible if interpreted according to context (see niv footnote).

Proverbs 23:7

For he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost (text).

For as he thinks within himself, so he is (footnote).

For as he puts on a feast, so he is (footnote).

Which is correct for the first half of this verse—the translation in the main text, or one of the two alternatives in the footnote?

Unfortunately, the Hebrew here is of uncertain meaning; so we have provided three possibilities. My preference is the second of the two footnote alternatives, with a slight addition to bring out more clearly the full force of the Hebrew: "for as he puts on a feast (or serves food) *within himself,* so he is."[33]

33. For the evidence, see my article, "Proverbs 23:7—'To Think' or 'To Serve food'?" *JANES* 19 (1989): 3–8.

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint . . . (NIV).

Where there is no vision, the people perish . . . (KJV).

Why is your rendering so different from the familiar "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (KJV), which was ideal for motivating people to respond to worthy causes such as missions and church-building programs?

While I commend the attempt to persuade people to support a worthy cause, this is not an ideal verse to use for that purpose. First, the Hebrew noun does not mean vision in that sense. Instead, it refers to a *prophetic* vision: a revelation or message from God given through a prophet to people. Second, the Hebrew verb never means "to perish." (The KJV translators must have misunderstood the verb; the NKJV corrects the translation by using the same words as the NIV.) The verb means "to let oneself go" or "to lack restraint." The point is that where there is no word from God, people cast off all restraint against evil. But where God's Word is present, blessed is he who obeys that Word, thus restraining evil.[34]

Ecclesiastes 1:2

"Meaningless! meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

Why did you translate a key term like the Hebrew *hebel* "meaningless" everywhere, when there are contexts where that nuance simply will not fit, notably 7:5–10 and 8:10–14?

In general, when a Hebrew word is as much a part of the theme of a book as *hebel* is of Ecclesiastes, it would seem to be always preferable to assign it the same essential nuance everywhere if at all possible. The *NIVSB* note on the word at 1:2 explains:

34. See my article, "Stretching Scripture," *Christian Herald* (September 1985): 36.

This key term ["meaningless"] occurs about 35 times in the book. . . . The Hebrew for it originally meant "breath" (see Ps. 39:5, 11; 62:9; 144:4). The basic thrust of Ecclesiastes is that all of life is meaningless, useless, hollow, futile and vain if it is not rightly related to God. Only when based on God and his word is life worthwhile.

This basic teaching surfaces throughout the book; see especially 2:24–26; 3:11–14, 22; 5:18–20; 8:15; 9:7–10; 11:7–12:1; 12:9–14.

The principle expounded in 7:5–10 is that a wise person will heed rebuke in order to avoid corruption. The point of verses 5–6 is that no true or lasting meaning to one's life can be found in the noisy but brief laughter or song of fools praising and entertaining one another. Rather, it is better to heed a wise man's rebuke. Thus meaning for one's life is to be gained from the wise, not the foolish.

It seems that the point of 8:10–14 is that the law of retribution often seems to be contradicted, and this can result in a sense of futility and meaninglessness. So while one should still believe in the law of divine retribution (8:13), one should realize that in this life there will be exceptions, resulting in a sense of futility and meaninglessness (8:14). Wisdom literature, of course, constantly wrestles with this problem (see, e.g., Ps. 73). The problem can cause even a believer at times to experience a sense of futility, meaninglessness, and frustration about this life.

Ecclesiastes 7:15–18; 9:1

In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness. Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise—why destroy yourself? Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool—why die before your time? It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. The man who fears God will avoid all extremes (7:15–18).

So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him (9:1).

Why did you use terms like "overrighteous," "overwise," "overwicked," "fool," "the one," "the other," and "love or hate," and what do they mean?

The first passage (7:15–18) is quite cryptic, elliptical, and enigmatic in the Hebrew. Equally qualified scholars understandably differ on how the Hebrew words are to be put together and filled out to make a meaningful syntactical whole in English. The NIV is just as defensible as any. As to the problem of meaning, the passage exhorts against the extremes of overscrupulousness, asceticism, and legalism on the one hand, and libertinism on the other hand. The person skillful in living avoids such extremes and leads a balanced life in submission to the Lord. In 9:1 "love or hate" is probably intended to speak of what is good and what is bad. Humans, with their limited perspective, don't know whether the future (in this life) will be good or bad. Such matters are under the control of the sovereign God (cf. 3:1–14).

Isaiah 7:14

> *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

Isn't a conservative-Evangelical theological bias reflected by rendering *'almâ* as "virgin" and by translating the Hebrew as *"will be* with child" instead of *"has* conceived"? Many Bible scholars prefer the translation "young woman" over "virgin" and the past tense "has" over the future "will be." Conversely, isn't the virgin birth undermined by the *NIVSB*'s suggestion of double fulfillment for Isaiah 7:14?

As to the first question, the only completely fair, objective, and safe statement one can make about *'almâ* is that Old Testament scholars disagree about its meaning. Some maintain that the Hebrew word means "virgin"; others hold that it means "young woman of marriageable age"; still others argue that it can mean either (depending on context, of course). However, "etymology offers no help and even usage is not all-determina-

tive in this instance."[35] What can be said for sure is that "it is used only of unmarried women and that it cannot be convincingly demonstrated that it does *not* mean 'virgin.'"[36] When the Jews translated their Hebrew Bible into Greek (the LXX) around 200 B.C., they used Greek *parthenos* ("virgin") for Hebrew *'almâ*. *Parthenos* is also the word used when Matthew quoted Isaiah 7:14 and applied it to Jesus in connection with His virgin birth (Matt. 1:18–25; cf. Luke 1:27, 34–35).

As far as the English verb tense is concerned, all the Hebrew has is a verbal adjective,[37] meaning that the translator must supply the appropriate tense of the verb *to be* according to the requirements of the context. Most scholars prefer the future for this context.

Regarding the second question, some have claimed that the NIV's use of the definite article implies only a historic fulfillment in Isaiah's day and thus a "quasi-liberal view of Isaiah 7:14."[38] The use of the article with "virgin" has nothing to do with any Evangelical versus liberal controversy. It is a legitimate translation of the Hebrew. It is true that *The NIV Study Bible* in its note on "sign" and "virgin" allows for fulfillment in both Isaiah's day and Matthew's day, but Evangelicals regard this progressive fulfillment of prophecy as perfectly acceptable. Many evangelical commentaries and journal articles have no problem with this view of prophecy, and a typological use of Isaiah 7:14 by Matthew fits perfectly with his practice elsewhere (cf. his similar use of Hos. 11:1 in Matt. 2:15 and of Jer. 31:15 in Matt. 2:18).

Even though the interpretations in the *NIVSB* may have significant Evangelical support, they should not necessarily be considered those of the translators. The *NIVSB* is giving a commentary, not a translation. The translation itself is neutral and will allow for single or progressive and typological fulfillment.[39]

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35. Kenneth L. Barker, "Virgin," in *WBE*, ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer et al. (Chicago: Moody, 1975), 2:1779.

36. Ibid.

37. BDB, 248; KB, 242.

38. Radmacher, 53.

39. Radmacher believes the note on "sign" in the *NIVSB* ("a sign was normally fulfilled within a few years [see 20:3; 37:30; cf. 8:18]") and the one on "virgin" ("May refer to a young woman betrothed to Isaiah [8:3]. . . . Mt. 1:23 apparently understood the woman mentioned here to be a type [a foreshadowing] of the Virgin Mary") imply that we should not look for a distant or messianic ful-

Isaiah 14:12

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star . . . (NIV).

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer . . . (KJV).

Is there an omission here? What happened to "Lucifer"?

The Hebrew for "morning star" was translated "Lucifer" in the Latin Vulgate, and the KJV then borrowed Lucifer (from the Latin) in its rendering. Although "morning star" is the correct rendering, scholars have debated who is meant by the words (whether the king of Babylon or Satan, or both). Christ, of course, is the true Morning Star (cf. Num. 24:17; 2 Peter 1:19; Rev. 22:16).

Isaiah 45:11

Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? (NIV).

Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me (KJV).

Why does the NIV have an interrogative sentence here when the KJV has a declarative one?

While the Hebrew could be translated as either a statement or a question, it is probably better in view of verses 1–10 to take it as a question. Understood that way, the Lord is rebuking people for questioning His sovereign ways and His dealings with

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filment of 7:14 during the New Testament period. He calls this a "flawed NIV view" that makes Isaiah 7:14 not a "direct prophecy about the virgin birth at all" (p. 53). In stating that the *NIVSB* note implies that one should not look for a distant fulfillment of the verse, Radmacher does not accept, at least in Isa. 7:14, that prophecy can be progressively fulfilled: both historically and eschatologically. What many Evangelicals regard as a both-and situation, he makes into an either-or situation. He fails to appreciate the *prophetic* force of biblical typology. For further understanding, one should read Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 106–39; S. Lewis Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 55–57, 66–67, 70–71, 76, 78–79, 93–94; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, 103–10.

His children, particularly through Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. This seems to be the view favored by the context.

Isaiah 53:10

And though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering . . . (NIV).
When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin . . . (KJV).

What is preferred here—"life" or "soul"—and what is the subject and object?

It seems most natural to take *nepeš* in the sense of either "life"[40] or "self."[41] The NIV chose the former with the resultant translation: "though you (i.e., the Lord) make his (i.e., the Servant's) life a guilt offering." Such an understanding assumes the use of a double accusative (double object: life and guilt offering), which is quite common in Hebrew syntax.[42]

Isaiah 53:11

He will see the light of life and be satisfied. . . .

Where did "light [of life]" come from?

The NIV followed the Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint rather than the Masoretic Text here.[43]

Isaiah 59:19

For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along (NIV).

40. BDB's category 3c, 659–60.
41. BDB's category 4, 660.
42. E. Kautzsch, ed., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon), 117, cc-ii.
43. See Radmacher's (54–56) criticisms of the NIV. His remarks seem unjustified since between the main text and the footnotes, all the textual data are laid out, including the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Text readings. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide a Hebrew text that is approximately a thousand years earlier than the Masoretic (traditional) Text.

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD *shall lift up a standard against him* (KJV).

Why is your rendering of the last part of this verse so different from the KJV's?

The KJV translators thought the Hebrew verb at the end of the verse had the idea of "rallying around a banner or lifting up a standard." This seems to be a misunderstanding of the Hebrew word, and "drive along" is probably a better translation. Even so, as the NIV footnote indicates, the last two lines could be alternatively translated: "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will put him to flight."

Jeremiah 7:22

I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Why did you add the word *just?*

One of the features of Hebrew sentence structure is a frequent use of elliptical constructions (the omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but must be supplied to make the construction grammatically and lexically complete). Our committee was convinced that there was an ellipsis in this verse. But since our goal in the NIV was to make the meaning clear, we filled in the ellipsis with the word "just." After all, God *had* given commands about sacrifices at Sinai. The point is that God gave commands *not only* about animal sacrifices but also—and more important—about obedience (v. 23). In fact, sacrifices are valid only when accompanied by sincere repentance and joyful obedience. The attitude of one's heart and the manner of one's life are far more important than the ritual of sacrifice. In other words, the teaching here is similar to that in 6:20 (cf. I Sam. 15:22–23; Pss. 40:6–8; 51:16–17; Isa. 1:10–17; Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:21–25; Mic. 6:6–8). An example of a similar ellipsis in the Greek syntax of the New Testament is in 1 Peter 4:6 (see *NIVSB* n. there).

Ezekiel 34:16

The sleek and the strong I will destroy . . . (NIV).
And the fat and the strong I will watch over . . . (RSV).

Why is the RSV rendering near the end of this verse ("I will watch over") seemingly the opposite of that in the NIV ("I will destroy")?

As the RSV footnote indicates, its translators followed the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, and the Latin Vulgate here. The Hebrew (Masoretic) text makes adequate sense, so we decided to retain it. In the context, the Lord's help to the helpless is *contrasted* with His judgment on the sleek (fat) and strong, who have oppressed His people. Contextually, then, the Hebrew reading ("I will destroy") fits nicely within the overall sense of the passage and probably should be followed.

Ezekiel 38:2–3; 39:1

*Set your face against . . . the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal
. . . I am against you . . . chief prince of Meshech and Tubal*
(38:2–3 NIV).

I am against you . . . chief prince of Meshech and Tubal (39:1 NIV).

*Set your face against . . . the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal
. . . I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and
Tubal* (38:2–3 NKJV).

I am against you . . . the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal (39:1
NKJV).

Why does the NIV have "chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" in its main text and "prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" in a footnote, when the NKJV has the latter in the text?

The Hebrew text of these verses can be translated either way. That is why we put one in the text and the alternative in the footnote.[44]

44. Radmacher is incorrect in his assertion that "the NIV has abandoned the traditional Jewish 'pointing' of the Hebrew text" (p. 37). Either reading can be

Ezekiel 45:1

You are to present to the LORD a portion of the land as a sacred district, 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide . . . (NIV).

Ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and breadth shall be ten thousand . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "cubits" while the KJV has "reeds"? Why does the NIV have "20,000" where the KJV has "ten thousand"?

The Hebrew text has only the numbers and does not specify the kind of measure to be used; this is why *reeds* is in italics in the KJV. Some scholars believe that the measure to be supplied is reeds (or rods); others think that it should be cubits. Obviously we have come down on the side of those who believe that cubits are in view.

Regarding the difference in numbers, most scholars believe that the reading of the LXX (20,000) is correct, but we have indicated in the footnote that the Hebrew text has 10,000 (20,000 and 10,000 were written similarly in Hebrew, so it would be easy to confuse the two in copying). We were influenced to follow the LXX reading here by verses 3, 5; 48:9, 13.[45]

Daniel 3:25

And the fourth looks like a son of the gods (NIV).

And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "a son of the gods" instead of "the Son of God" (KJV)?

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obtained from the Hebrew or Masoretic text as it is. The issue is whether the Hebrew word *rō'š* should be construed as a common noun ("chief") or as a proper noun ("Rosh"). See, among others; Ralph H. Alexander, "Ezekiel," in *EBC* (1986), 6:929–30, including his note on 38:2–3. If "Rosh" is the correct understanding, then this is the only occurrence of the Hebrew word *rō'š* in that sense or as a place name in the entire Old Testament.

45. For a balanced, objective discussion of cubits versus rods (or reeds), see F. W. J. Schroder, "Ezekiel," in *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* by John Peter Lange, trans. and ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 424.

The Hebrew phrase can be rendered either way. We chose "a son of the gods" because (1) the words come from the mouth of a pagan, polytheistic, idolatrous king (Nebuchadnezzar is not a worshiper of the Lord at this point; so his words and what he meant by them must be understood contextually in keeping with his beliefs and religion), and (2) a few verses later (v. 28) he himself tells us what he meant by "a son of the gods," namely, an *angel*. This does not deny that, unknown to the king, the fourth person may well have been, as some believe, a Christophany (a preincarnate appearance of the second Person of the Trinity—God the Son).

Hosea 11:12

And Judah is unruly against God, even against the faithful Holy One (NIV).

But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints (KJV).

Why does the NIV have "And Judah is unruly against God, even against the faithful Holy One" instead of "but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints" (KJV)?

The last part of this verse has long been a difficult problem in Hebrew exegesis (or Old Testament interpretation). The verb, depending on what the correct root and etymology are, can mean "be unruly," "be known," or "rule." The preposition can mean "against," "to," "by," or "with." The noun at the end can mean "Holy One" or "holy ones," that is, "saints." In a situation like this, one must judge probability based on the context. The prophet (or God) would hardly be saying something complimentary about Judah, particularly in view of 12:2. Therefore the negative and condemnatory nuances of the words seem more appropriate with the emphasis in the following verses of the context. (Actually 11:12 is 12:1 in the Hebrew Bible, so it naturally goes with what follows.)

Amos 3:3

Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? (NIV)

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (KJV)

Why did you ruin a good verse on unity by translating the Hebrew "unless they have agreed to do so" (NIV) instead of "except they be agreed" (KJV)?

In the commendable desire to promote a spirit of fellowship, love, and harmony among Christians, people sometimes misapply this quotation. Such a misuse can be avoided by correct translation and interpretation. In context, "with these rhetorical questions [in verses 3–6] (involving comparisons) Amos builds up to the statements of verses 7–8, to explain why he is speaking such terrifying words. Each picture is of cause and effect, using figures drawn from daily life—culminating in divine action (v. 6)."[46] The NIV brings this out: "Do two walk together [the effect] unless they have agreed to do so [the cause]?" Or, to put it another way, do two people meet and go somewhere together unless they have made an appointment to do so? To promote unity among believers, passages such as Psalm 133 and Philippians 2:2 seem more appropriate.[47]

Micah 5:2

Whose origins are from of old, from ancient times (text).

Whose goings out are from of old, from days of eternity (footnote).

In the last two lines of this verse, why did you not reverse the main text and the alternative translation found in the footnotes?

The NIV translators were not careless in the handling of Old Testament messianic prophecies or of any other doctrines, but good, godly, spiritual scholars differ on the interpretation of certain biblical passages. For example, the Hebrew text at the end of this verse can be translated either (1) "whose goings out are from of old, from days of eternity" or (2) "whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Those who prefer the first rendering naturally use it to argue for the eternity of the Messiah.

46. *NIVSB*, n. on 3:3–6.
47. See my article, "Stretching Scripture," 36, 38.

Those who prefer the second translation believe that the expression refers to the ancient "origins" of the Messiah in the line of David (as indicated in the Davidic Covenant of 2 Sam. 7) and in the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10).

The majority of the Committee on Bible Translation felt that the *context* favored the second view: "*Bethlehem . . .* of *Judah,* out of *you* [emphasis mine] will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel" (note the emphasis on the origins of the future Davidic Ruler in the Davidic town of Bethlehem). So they put the second rendering in the text and the first one in the footnotes as an alternative. Incidentally, those who favor the second translation still believe in the eternity of the Messiah (and so in the eternal Son of God) and believe that His eternality is clearly taught in other passages, particularly in the New Testament.[48]

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48. Radmacher, 56–58, criticizes the rendering of Mic. 5:2 in the NIV, preferring the footnotes. For a defense of the main text of the NIV here, see e.g., Ralph L. Smith, *Micah—Malachi,* WBC, 42–44; Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah,* NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 342–47; Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *Interpreting the Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 148–49.

2

Questions on the Gospels and Acts

Many questions about the NIV New Testament arise because of different readings among the more than 5,000 Greek manuscripts and papyri (written scrolls), most of which were discovered since the KJV was released in 1611. Some of these different readings have affected how the NIV was translated and are discussed briefly in the answers in these two chapters on New Testament questions. To keep this in proper perspective, however, it should be noted that all Greek manuscripts and papyri agree on approximately 98 percent of the Greek New Testament text. The differences, then, pertain to only about 2 percent of the total text of the New Testament. And the differences do not affect Christian doctrines.[1] *They are still intact.*

In evaluating the different readings, translators are guided by such principles as the following.[2] (1) Generally, the earlier manuscripts are preferred. (2) The reading that best explains the origin of the others should be chosen. (3) Normally, the more difficult reading is preferred. (4) The shorter reading is usually preferred. (5) Manuscripts are to be weighed rather than counted. For example, preference is given to those manuscripts that have most often proved to be correct when all the other tests have been applied to them.[3]

1. See Daniel B. Wallace, "The Majority Text and the Original Text: Are They Identical?" *Bib. Sac.* 148 (April–June 1991): 157–58.
2. See Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament,* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 209–10; D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 29–31.
3. One who desires more information may consult Appendix 3 as well as works like Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: UBS, 1975); Philip W. Comfort, *Early Manuscripts and Modern Translations of the New Testament* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1990); Daniel B. Wallace, "The Majority-Text Theory: History, Methods and Critique," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37 (June 1994): 185–215; David Alan Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994).

Matthew 1:25

But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son . . . (NIV).

And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV not read "she gave birth to her firstborn son" (cf. KJV)?

Since the earlier manuscripts do not have the words "her firstborn," the TR (Textus Receptus, or the Greek manuscripts behind the KJV translation) apparently inserted them here from Luke 2:7, where they are clearly original, as confirmed by all manuscripts.

Matthew 5:22

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother . . . (NIV).

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV not read "anyone who is angry with his brother without cause" (cf. KJV)?

Earle explains:

Some manuscripts add *"without cause"* (cf. KJV). But the additional Greek *eike* is not in the earliest manuscript (Papyrus 67, ca. A.D. 200), nor in the two fourth-century manuscripts [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus]. It is understandable how a later scribe might add this modifier to soften the rigor of this warning.[4]

Matthew 5:32; 19:9

But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness . . . (5:32 NIV).

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4. Ralph Earle, "The Rationale for an Eclectic New Testament Text," in *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker (Colorado Springs: IBS, 1989), 55–56.

I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness . . . (19:9 NIV).

But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication . . . (5:32 KJV).

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication . . . (19:9 KJV).

Why did you translate the Greek word *porneia* as "marital unfaithfulness" instead of "fornication" (KJV)?

According to the standard New Testament Greek lexicon, or dictionary, *porneia* is used of any and every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, including prostitution, unchastity, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and, in their words, "the sexual unfaithfulness of a married woman" in the references above.[5] We translated it "marital unfaithfulness" so that it could include not only fornication and adultery but also any other kind of unlawful sexual activity, such as homosexual and lesbian practices.

Matthew 5:44

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you . . . (NIV).

Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you . . . (NIV footnote).

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you . . . (KJV).

Why is the footnote reading ("bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you") not in the main text, as in the KJV?

Since no early manuscript or witness contains these words, scribes (copyists) apparently added them to later manuscripts from Luke 6:27–28 (see NIV there).

5. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* trans., ed., and rev. W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 693.

Matthew 6:13

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one . . .
(NIV).

Since God does not lead us into temptation, why did you translate the first part of this verse "Lead us not into temptation"?

It is true that God does not lead us into temptation (see 1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:13). The meaning of this petition, then, must be similar to that of Luke 22:40: "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." The sense is: "Do not allow us to be led into temptation" or "Do not allow us to fall when we are tempted." In other words, "Protect us from our own vulnerability—we need Your help."[6]

Matthew 6:13

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen
(NIV *footnote*).

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever.
Amen* (KJV).

What happened to the familiar, traditional ending to the Lord's Prayer at the close of this verse?

As the footnote indicates, some late manuscripts do read "for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." With the exception of one fifth-century manuscript, however, the ending is not found in any manuscript earlier than the ninth century. It was probably composed later to adapt the prayer for liturgical use in the church. Although the words were almost certainly not a part of the original text of this Gospel, the idea is biblical (cf. 1 Chron. 29:11–13). It is also significant that the parallel in Luke 11:2–4 has no such conclusion—not even in the KJV!

6. See A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1930–33), 1:54.

Matthew 9:13

For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners . . . (NIV).

For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance . . . (KJV).

After "sinners," why does the NIV not have "to repentance," as in the KJV?

The earlier Greek manuscripts do not have the additional words. They were probably inserted here from Luke 5:32, where they are clearly original.

Matthew 12:40

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish . . . (NIV).

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "huge fish" instead of "whale" (KJV)?

As the *NIVSB* points out in its note on Jonah 1:17, "The Hebrew [of Jonah] and the Greek of Matthew 12:40 are both general terms for a large fish, not necessarily a whale." This is confirmed by the Hebrew and Greek lexicons.

Matthew 13:25

But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat . . . (NIV).

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV use "weeds" here instead of "tares" (KJV)?

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines "tares" as "noxious elements, likened to weeds growing among wheat." The Greek word probably refers to darnel, any of several weed-grasses that look like wheat while young but can later be distinguished.

Matthew 13:32

Though it is the smallest of all your seeds . . . (NIV).
Which indeed is the least of all seeds . . . (KJV).

When you added "your," were you "trying to rescue Jesus from scientific embarrassment when he calls the mustard seed 'the least of all seeds'" (KJV)?[7]

"The mustard seed is not the smallest seed known today, but it was the smallest seed used by Palestinian farmers and gardeners, and under favorable conditions the plant could reach some ten feet in height."[8] Thus all we did was culturally and contextually nuance "smallest of all (the) seeds." Besides, the Greek article (the) itself can at times carry the force of a possessive pronoun ("your").[9]

Matthew 16:19; 18:18

Whatever you bind on earth will be [have been, footnote] bound in heaven . . . (16:19 NIV).

Whatever you bind on earth will be [have been, footnote] bound in heaven . . . (18:18 NIV).

Why did you not handle the Greek verbal construction here as a future perfect (similarly John 20:23)?

In the two Matthean verses the alternative translation ("will have been bound") is in the footnote. The footnote alternative is not in John 20:23, but cross-references there refer the reader back to the two verses in Matthew. The *NIVSB* does have the alternative translation in its note on John 20:23.

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7. Robert P. Martin makes this claim of translation manipulation in his *Accuracy of Translation and the New International Version* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1989), 26.

8. *NIVSB*, n. on 13:32.

9. See H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 148.

Matthew 17:21

But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting . . . (NIV *footnote).*

Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting . . . (KJV).

Where is this verse in the NIV?

It is the footnote. Ralph Earle explains:

To answer that question we should first turn to Mark 9:29 . . ."and fasting" is not found in our two fourth-century manuscripts (cf. NIV). It apparently was added in the fifth century, when much emphasis was being given to Gnostic asceticism and to monasticism. Then the whole of Mark 9:29 was inserted in Matthew. But Matthew 17:21 is not found in our two earliest manuscripts.[10]

Matthew 18:11

The Son of Man came to save what was lost . . . (NIV *footnote).*

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost . . . (KJV).

What happened to this verse?

It is in the NIV footnote. Since the words of verse 11 are not found in any of the earliest Greek manuscripts and in other ancient witnesses, they were probably inserted here from Luke 19:10, where the earliest manuscripts do have them—and so does the NIV.

Matthew 18:22

Jesus answered, I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times [seventy times seven, footnote] . . . (NIV).

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. . . . (KJV).

10. Earle, 56.

Which is correct—"seventy-seven times" (the main text) or "seventy times seven" (the footnote and KJV)?

The difficulty lies in correctly understanding the original construction. Some Greek specialists say it should be translated "seventy-seven times"; other Greek experts think it should be rendered "seventy times seven." Fortunately, the sense is the same either way. However it is translated, it is an idiom meaning "as often as necessary," "an unlimited number of times," or "times without number." Seven is the number of completeness and is often used symbolically in this way.[11]

Matthew 20:22

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" . . . (NIV).

But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able (KJV).

After Jesus' question, why does the NIV not have the additional words, "and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with" (KJV)?

Since the clause is absent from all major early Greek manuscripts and other ancient witnesses, it is probably a later insertion from the parallel passage in Mark 10:38–39.

Matthew 23:14

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Therefore you will be punished more severely . . . (NIV *footnote*).

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation . . . (KJV).

11. See Robert Horton Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 140.

Where is this verse in the NIV?

It is in the footnote. Since it is not found in the earliest manuscripts, and since the witnesses that include it have it in different places (some before v. 13, others after v. 13), it was apparently interpolated here from the parallel in Mark 12:40 or Luke 20:47.

Matthew 23:32

Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!

Why did the NIV translators add the words, "of the sin"?

We did it for clarity—to fill out the thought of the elliptical expression (a phrase with missing but understood words). D. A. Carson explains:

> The idea behind "the measure of the sin" is that God can only tolerate so much sin; and then, when the measure is "full," he must respond in wrath (cf. Gen. 15:16; 1 Thess. 2:14–16). The idea is common in the intertestamental literature (e.g., Jub. 14:16; 1 Enoch 50:2; 2 Esd. 4:36–37; 4Q185 2:9–10), but never before was the concept applied to Israel.[12]

Matthew 27:35

When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots [footnote: lots that the words spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled: "They divided my garments among themselves and cast lots for my clothing" (Psalm 22:18)] . . . (NIV).

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet . . . (KJV).

What happened to the end of this verse, with its quotation of Psalm 22:18 (see the KJV)?

12. D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *EBC* (1984), 8:483–84; see also, among others, Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 348; D. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1972), 314.

It is in the NIV footnote. Since only a few late manuscripts have the extra words here, and since they are not attested in the earlier Greek manuscripts and other ancient witnesses, it is likely that later copyists borrowed them from the parallel passage in John 19:24 and inserted them here. Then they introduced these words with the ones that Matthew normally used before quotations.

Matthew 28:1

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week . . . (Matt. 28:1).

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning . . . (Luke 24:1).

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark . . . (John 20:1).

How can you reconcile time references like "After the Sabbath" and "at dawn on the first day of the week" (here) and "while it was still dark" (John 20:1)?

The *NIVSB* notes on Luke 24:1; John 20:1 state:

Sunday began by Jewish time at sundown on Saturday. Spices could then be bought (Mark 16:1), and they were ready to set out early the next day. When the women started out, it was dark (John 20:1), and by the time they arrived at the tomb, it was still early dawn (see Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2).

Mark says it was "just after sunrise" (Mark 16:2). Perhaps the women came in groups, with Mary Magdalene coming very early. Or John may refer to the time of leaving home, Mark to that of arrival at the tomb.

Matthew 28:1

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week . . . (NIV).

Why did you translate the Greek plural *sabbatōn* as a singular ("Sabbath") instead of "Sabbaths" or "week"?

First, William Hendriksen observed:

It makes little difference whether one conceives of the Greek plural for *sabbath* as referring *to the day* or to an entire *week* (the time from one day of rest to another). If the first is meant, then the idea is that this was the first day counting from the sabbath-day; hence the first day after the sabbath-day. If the second is meant, the result is still the same; the day indicated is then not the last of the week but the first. In either case Sunday is meant.[13]

Second, the Greek lexicons indicate that the plural form of Sabbath can refer to a *single* Sabbath. For example, in Matthew 28:1 *opse (de) sabbatōn* should be translated "after the Sabbath," while *eis mian sabbatōn* should be rendered "on the first day of the week."[14]

Matthew 28:9

Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.

Why did the NIV translators not render the Greek words *idou* and *Chairete* as "Behold" and "Rejoice" respectively?[15]

D. A. Carson has commented:

With mingled fear and joy, the women run to tell their news to the disciples (v. 8), when "suddenly" (the probable force of *idou* . . . in this context) Jesus meets them (v. 9). "Greetings" *(chairete)* is a normal Greek salutation (cf. 26:49).[16]

Matthew 28:19–20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. . . .

13. William Hendriksen, *Matthew*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 987, n. 899.

14. See BAGD (739) and supporting examples from both the Greek NT and Greek sources outside the NT.

15. Radmacher (38–39) believes that the Greek *idou* should not be translated "Suddenly," and *Chairete* should not be rendered "Greetings."

16. "Matthew," in *EBC*, 8:589; further support is given by Clarence B. Hale, whose first definition of *chaire* is "greetings" (*Let's Study Greek* [Chicago: Moody, 1959], 4).

Why does the NIV use an imperative translation ("go") for the Greek participle?

The basic command is "make disciples," and this is to be carried out by "going," "baptizing," and "teaching." Although it is true that the verb *mathēteusate* ("make disciples") is the only command/ imperative in form, the three participles *poreuthentes* ("going"), *baptizontes* ("baptizing"), and *didaskontes* ("teaching") nevertheless also take on an imperatival force because the main verb *mathēteusate* is imperative. As Carson notes, "When a participle functions as a circumstantial participle dependent on an imperative, it normally gains some imperatival force."[17]

Mark 1:2–3

> *It is written in Isaiah the prophet .. (*NIV*).*
> *As it is written in the prophets . . . (*KJV*).*

Why does the NIV introduce these Old Testament quotations with the words "in Isaiah the prophet" instead of "in the prophets" (KJV), especially since only one of the citations is from Isaiah?

"Isaiah the prophet" is the reading found in the earliest Greek manuscripts. The situation is analogous to that in Matthew 27:9–10: "The quotation that follows seems to be a combining of Zechariah 11:12–13 and Jeremiah 19:1–13. . . . But Matthew attributes it to the major prophet Jeremiah, just as Mark (1:2–3) quotes Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 but attributes them to the major prophet Isaiah."[18]

Mark 6:11

> *And if any place will not welcome you . . . (*NIV*).*
> *And whosoever shall not receive you . . . (*KJV*).*

17. "Matthew," in *EBC*, 8:595.
18. *NIVSB*, n. on Matt. 29:9; see also Kenneth L. Barker, "Zechariah," in *EBC* (1985), 7:677.

Why does the NIV read "if any place will not welcome you" instead of "whoever will not receive you" (cf. KJV)?

The earlier Greek manuscripts have "any place" instead of "whoever," and the Greek verb can also mean "welcome," not just "receive."

Mark 7:16

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear . . . (NIV footnote).
If any man have ears to hear, let him hear . . . (KJV).

Why is this verse missing?

It is in the footnote. "Although this verse is present in the majority of the Greek manuscripts, it does not occur in the most ancient ones. It appears to be a scribal addition derived from either 4:9 or 4:23."[19]

Mark 9:44, 46

Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched . . . (9:44, 46 NIV footnote).
Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched . . . (9:44, 46 KJV).

Where are these verses in the NIV?

They are in the footnotes. However, they do not appear in important early Greek manuscripts and were evidently added here by later copyists from verse 48, where the words are genuine and the manuscripts agree.

Mark 11:26

But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your sins . . . (NIV footnote).

19. *NIVSB*, n. on v. 16.

But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses . . . (KJV).

What happened to this verse?

It is in the footnote. However, it is not found in the earliest Greek manuscripts and was probably inserted here later from Matthew 6:15 (see NIV there).

Mark 15:28

And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors (KJV).

Why is this verse missing in the NIV?

It is in the footnote. The earliest Greek manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have the verse. Later copyists probably added it here from Luke 22:37 (quoting Isa. 53:12). Further evidence for it being added may be the fact that Mark does not often expressly quote the Old Testament.

Mark 16:9–20

The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9–20 (prefatory note).

Why does the NIV cast doubt on the authenticity of these verses with its prefatory note?

The Committee on Bible Translation has now revised the textual note to read: "The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9–20"—thus removing the value judgment "most reliable."[20]

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20. For a brief treatment of the textual problem here, see the *NIVSB* n. on 16:9–20. For a full discussion, see Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament,* 122–28.

Luke 1:1

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us . . . (NIV).

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV give primacy to "fulfilled" instead of "believed" (KJV)?

What should be given primacy is not what agrees with the KJV but what agrees with the meaning of the inspired Greek text. Most Greek scholars believe that the meaning here should be "fulfilled," not "believed," though "believed" as a possible alternative rendering is in the footnote.

Luke 1:3

Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning . . . (NIV).

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first . . . (KJV).

Did Luke's Gospel originate in his own human "investigation" or in his divinely inspired "perfect understanding" (KJV)? Do the NIV translators attack inspiration here?

As in verse 1, the issue again is: What is the meaning of the Greek text? In his superb commentary on the Greek text of Luke, I. Howard Marshall concluded, "Luke means that he has thoroughly investigated all the facts . . . in the light of the available evidence."[21] Since the NIV translators hold to the divine inspiration of Scripture, they would never undermine it in their translations. As the *NIVSB* puts it, "Inspiration by the Holy Spirit did not rule out human effort."[22] Not only is Luke's Gos-

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21. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 42.
22. Note on Luke 1:3.

pel inspired, but it is also true and accurate historically. It will pass the test of theological and historical scrutiny.

Luke 2:33, 43

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. . . . After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, . . . (NIV).

And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. . . . and Joseph and his mother knew not of it . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "child's father and mother" and "his parents" in these verses instead of "Joseph and his mother" (KJV)? Joseph was not Jesus' "father" or "parent." Were the translators attempting to deny Christ's Virgin birth and, consequently, also His deity?

The KJV also has "his parents" in verse 41. The older Greek manuscripts support the translation "child's father and mother"; and Joseph was considered Jesus' *legal* father, so there is no theological problem with that reading. It should also be noted that John 1:45 refers to Jesus as the "son of Joseph" in the KJV. The Virgin birth is still clearly and explicitly taught in Matthew 1:18–25 and Luke 1:26–38 (including in the NIV). If the NIV was trying to deny Christ's deity, it would not have explicit statements on His deity in several passages where the KJV does not (see the NIV in John 1:18; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter I:1). With the help of a chart, D. A. Carson demonstrates that the NIV has more references to Christ's deity than the KJV and most English versions.[23]

Luke 4:4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone'" (NIV).

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God . . . (KJV).

23. D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 64.

Why were the words "but by every word of God" not included at the end of this verse?

They are not found in the earlier Greek manuscripts and were probably added here by a later copyist by assimilating this passage to the parallel of Matthew 4:4 or to the LXX of Deuteronomy 8:3. (See the NIV in Matt. 4:4.)

Luke 8:43

And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her [and she had spent all she had on doctors (footnote)] (NIV).

And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV not have the words "and she had spent all she had on doctors" (cf. KJV)?

It is in the footnote. But since the words are absent from some of the earlier Greek manuscripts (including the earliest, Papyrus 75, c. A.D. 200), this again appears to be a case of a copyist borrowing a clause—here from the parallel in Mark 5:26.

Luke 9:55–56

But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village (NIV).

But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village (KJV).

Why are some words missing at the end of verse 55 and the beginning of verse 56 (see KJV)?

The extra words are not attested in any of the earliest Greek manuscripts, though the NIV does have them in the footnote.

Luke 10:1, 17

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others [seventy (footnote)] . . . (10:1 NIV).

The seventy-two returned with joy . . . (10:17 NIV).

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also . . . (10:1 KJV).

And the seventy returned again with joy . . . (10:17 KJV).

Which is correct—the main text ("seventy-two") or the footnote alternative ("seventy")?

This is a difficult textual problem, but I. Howard Marshall's excellent commentary on the Greek text of Luke indicates that 72 is slightly favored.[24]

Luke 14:34

Salt is good . . . (NIV).

Therefore, salt is good . . . (NASB).

Why is Greek *oun* not translated near the beginning of this verse? It seems that the NIV often overlooks connectives in order to have polished English.

It is quite correct that the NIV sometimes passes over connectives to improve English style. Frequently, the connection is clear enough from juxtaposition or punctuation. In some contexts, however, the sense of the connectives is uncertain and thus left untranslated. For example, J. R. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel say this about Luke 14:34: "*oun* is difficult to interpret as to its reference, and best left untranslated."[25] In many of its occurrences, the same may be said about *gar* (commonly "for"). Significantly, not even the KJV translators ventured a rendering of *oun* in Luke 14:34.[26]

24. Marshall, 414–15.
25. J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 539.
26. For more on connectives, see Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, 96–97.

Luke 16:22–23

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side . . . (NIV).

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "Abraham's side" instead of "Abraham's bosom"?

Since Lazarus will not literally fit in Abraham's bosom, the point of the figure is nearness, which "side" captures very nicely.

Luke 17:36

Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left (NIV footnote).

Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left (KJV).

Where is this verse in the NIV?

It is in the footnote, but it is absent from virtually all the early Greek manuscripts. A later scribe most likely inserted it here from Matthew 24:40.

Luke 23:17

Now he was obliged to release one man to them at the Feast (NIV footnote).

(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast) (KJV).

What happened to this verse?

It is in the footnote; however, since it does not appear in several early Greek manuscripts (including Papyrus 75, c. A.D. 200), it was evidently added here later by assimilating this passage to Matthew 27:15 and/or Mark 15:6.

Luke 23:42

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (NIV).

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "Jesus" instead of "Lord" (KJV)? Do the NIV translators doubt that Jesus is Lord and God?

First, the name *Jesus* itself also speaks of the fact that He is Lord, for *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua,* which means "the Lord (Yahweh or Jehovah) saves." Second, since the earliest Greek manuscripts do not have "Lord," most scholars believe that a copyist mistook the word *Jesus* in the sentence as a dative construction (hence, "said *unto* Jesus," KJV). Then that same copyist inserted "Lord" to function as a vocative (the one addressed), whereas most scholars construe "Jesus" as the vocative.

It is unwise, if not unfair, to assess the theology of the NIV translators on the basis of one verse; for example, Luke contains two verses where the NIV has "Lord" and the KJV does not (7:19; 10:41). Both are instances where the earliest Greek manuscripts have "Lord," and only the later ones read "Jesus."

The NIV has also been accused of denigrating the name *Jesus* and the title *Christ* by not having them in passages where the KJV does, but the NIV uses names and titles in verses where the KJV does not. For instance, the NIV has "Jesus" in Luke 5:34 but the KJV does not. Here NIV translators preferred different (and earlier) Greek manuscripts discovered since 1611.

Concerning the NIV's handling of "Christ" (which means "Anointed One [of God]," a translation of the Hebrew for "Messiah"), some have claimed its omission signaled disregard for Jesus' messiahship. The facts do not bear this out; the NIV has "Christ" and the KJV does not in the following: Acts 10:48; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 15:27; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Ephesians 1:9, 13; 5:21, 29; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 2:9–10, 13; 3:15; Philemon 20; Hebrews 9:15, 26; 10:5; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 3:16; Jude 25. In two or three of these references "Christ" replaces a pronoun for clarity, but in the rest, early Greek manu-

scripts read "Christ." In verses where the NIV does not have "Christ" and the KJV does, the omissions are not theologically motivated. Otherwise, the NIV would not read "Christ" in numerous places where the KJV does not. Rather, these differences represent honest attempts to arrive at the most likely original readings from all existing Greek manuscripts and papyri (over 5,000).

All such examples cited by KJV and TR adherents are due to differences in the Greek manuscripts themselves. Until one is prepared to acknowledge that there are variant readings in the Greek manuscripts and is ready to accept the legitimacy of textual studies in order to determine the most likely original readings from a careful analysis and comparison of all the data, it will not really be very fruitful to pursue the issue further with such an individual.

John 1:14, 18; 3:16

We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only . . . (1:14 NIV).

But God the One and Only . . . (1:18 NIV).

That he gave his one and only Son . . . (3:16 NIV).

And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten . . . (1:14 KJV).

The only begotten Son . . . (1:18 KJV).

That he gave his only begotten Son . . . (3:16 KJV).

Why does the NIV render the Greek word *monogenēs* as "one and only" instead of "only begotten"?

Richard N. Longenecker demonstrates that *monogenēs* must mean something like "unique," "special," "incomparable," or "one and only," not "only begotten," though the NIV allows for the latter in the footnote.[27]

27. Richard N. Longenecker, "The One and Only Son," in *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, 119–26.

John 1:18

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known (NIV).

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "God the One and Only" instead of "the one and only Son" (cf. KJV)?

Although some manuscripts read "Son" (see the NIV footnote), the manuscript evidence favors "God" over "Son." All the earliest manuscripts and papyri, supported by other ancient witnesses, read "God." The latter reading would also form an inclusio, in that John's prologue would have begun (v. 1) and ended (v. 18) with a reference to Christ as "God." Edwin H. Palmer calls this verse "one of those few clear and decisive texts that declare that Jesus is God."[28]

John 3:13

No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man (NIV).

Even the Son of man which is in heaven (KJV).

Why does the NIV not have the clause "who is in heaven" at the end of the verse? Are the translators opposed to Christ's omnipresence?

The NIV does have the clause in the footnote. It is not found, however, in any of the earliest Greek manuscripts and papyri. Christ's omnipresence and omniscience are clearly taught in several other New Testament passages (e.g., 1:48 and 4:29 in this same Gospel; see also Matt. 16:21; Luke 6:8; 11:17).

28. Edwin H. Palmer, "Isn't the King James Version Good Enough? (The KJV and the NIV Compared)," in *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation,* 143; for a list of passages that either explicitly state or strongly imply the deity of Christ, see the *NIVSB* n. on Rom. 9:5; cf. Carson, *The King James Version Debate,* 63–64.

John 5:2

Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda . . .

Why did the NIV render the term *Hebrew* as "Aramaic" in John and Acts but "Hebrew" in Revelation?

Translators must strongly consider context in rendering Greek words. In John 5:2; 19:13, 17; 20:16 Aramaic forms of words are used; hence, "Aramaic" (a Semitic language closely related to Hebrew, and the most common language spoken at that time by Jews in the land of Israel). In John 19:20 the translation "Aramaic" makes John consistent in his use of the term in his message to the Jews.

In Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14 there is less certainty (because no Aramaic words appear); hence, the footnotes acknowledge the possibility of the alternative understanding ("Hebrew"). In Revelation 9:11; 16:16 the translators used the word "Hebrew" because the words *Abaddon* and *Armageddon* are Hebrew. The Greek lexicons recognize "Aramaic" as part of the semantic range of the term *Hebrew*.[29]

John 5:4

From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease he had (footnote).

Where is this verse in the NIV?

It is in the footnote. However, since verses 3b–4 are not found in any of the earliest Greek manuscripts and papyri and since they are often marked by scribes as spurious in the later manuscripts, they were "doubtless inserted by a later copyist to explain why people waited by the pool in large numbers."[30]

29. E.g., BAGD, 213; on the whole issue of what language(s) Jesus spoke, see most recently Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Did Jesus Speak Greek?" *BAR* 18 (September–October 1992): 58–63, 76–77.

30. *NIVSB*, n. on 5:3–4.

John 6:47

I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life (NIV).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life (KJV).

Why does the NIV not read "believes in me" (cf. the KJV)?

The earliest Greek manuscripts and papyri do not have "in me." Providing an object of belief is the kind of thing one would expect of a later copyist. In any event, the intended object of faith is clear from the context.

John 7:53–8:11

The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53–8:11 (prefatory note).

Why cast doubt on the authenticity of this passage with the prefatory note?

The Committee on Bible Translation has now revised the textual note to read: "The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53–8:11"—thus removing the value judgment "most reliable."[31]

John 14:2

In my Father's house are many rooms . . . (NIV).

In my Father's house are many mansions . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV have "rooms" instead of "mansions" (KJV)?

The Greek word used here *(monai)* does not convey the modern connotation of "mansions." The word "mansions" in King James's day had the idea of "manse," which was a dwelling.[32]

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31. For a brief treatment of the textual problem here, see the *NIVSB* n. on 7:53–8:11; for a full discussion, see Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament,* 219–22.

32. See *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1:1719.

The Greek word means "dwellings" or "dwelling places." Since heaven is pictured figuratively here as a "house," the translation "rooms" fits the imagery nicely.

John 15:2

> *He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit . . .* (NIV).
>
> *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away . . .* (KJV).

Why did the NIV render the Greek verb *airō* as "cuts off" instead of "lifts up" or at least "takes away"?[33]

The majority of exegetes, translators, and commentators see *airō* as having a negative force.[34] Many interpreters maintain that the first part of verse 2 must be understood in the same way as verse 6. The *NIVSB* indicates that the meaning there is

> judged (see note on v. 2). In light of such passages as 6:39; 10:27–28, these branches probably do not represent true believers. Genuine salvation is evidenced by a life of fruitfulness (see v. 10 and notes on vv. 2, 4; see also Heb. 6:9, "things that accompany salvation").[35]

For the teaching in verses 2a, 6, compare also Matthew 7:19–23 and Hebrews 6:7–8.

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33. This query or criticism comes from Radmacher, 42–44, supported by R. K. Harrison (in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. G. W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–88], 4:986), both of whom construe *airō* here with a *positive* sense.

34. For example, BAGD classifies the use of *airō* here under the fourth semantic category: *"take away, remove* with no suggestion of lifting up." In John 15:2 BAGD says the verb is used specifically "of branches cut off" (p. 24). Johannes Behm (*"klēma,"* in *TDNT*, 3:757), Merrill C. Tenney (John, in *EBC* [1981], 9:151), Leon Morris (*John*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 669), A. T. Robertson (*Word Pictures*, 5:257), F. L. Godet (*John* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, reprint of 1893 edition], 2:294), and G. E. Post (in James Hastings, ed., *A Dictionary of the Bible* [New York: Scribners, 1898–1904], 4:868) agree. *NBC, IBC, ECB, WBC, BKC, NJBC, EGT,* and AGT (as well as others) likewise concur.

35. *NIVSB*, n. on 15:6.

John 19:23

With the undergarment remaining . . . (NIV).
And also his coat . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "undergarment" instead of "coat" (KJV)?

"Undergarment" seems the better translation. Leon Morris has written in his excellent commentary on *John:*

> It was customary for the soldiers who performed a crucifixion to take the clothing of the executed man. It was a recognized perquisite of their office. In accordance with this custom the soldiers who crucified Jesus divided his clothing into four, one part for each soldier. . . . The "coat," however, was in a different class. This was the undergarment, and, instead of being made out of separate pieces of cloth, sewn together, it was woven in one piece, without a seam. It was thus of some value.[36]

The *NIVSB* adds that this undergarment was a "type of shirt, reaching from the neck to the knees or ankles. *seamless.* Therefore too valuable to be cut up."[37]

Acts 1:18

With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

How can your rendering here be reconciled with Matthew 27:3, 5, 7?

The different accounts of Judas's death are supplementary and complementary, not contradictory. When this verse says, "Judas bought a field," it means that he bought the field indirectly. The money that he returned to the priests (Matt. 27:3) was used to purchase the potter's field (Matt. 27:7). Acts also says that Judas "fell headlong," whereas Matthew 27:5 reports that he hanged himself. Both can be true: "It appears that when

36. Morris, *John*, NICNT, 808–9.
37. *NIVSB*, n. on v. 23.

the body finally fell, either because of decay or because some-
one cut it down, it was in a decomposed condition and so broke
open in the middle. Another possibility is that 'hanged' . . .
means 'impaled' . . . and that the gruesome results of Judas's sui-
cide are described here."[38]

Acts 2:27

Because you will not abandon me to the grave . . . (NIV).

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell . . . (KJV).

Because thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades . . . (NASB).

**Why did the NIV translators render the Greek *Hades* as "grave"
instead of "hell" (KJV) or "Hades" (NASB)?**

This verse is a quotation of Psalm 16:10, where the NIV trans-
lates the Hebrew *Sheol* as "grave." This meaning is clear from
the parallelism of the verse in Psalm 16:10. "Decay" (or "corrup-
tion," KJV) can only refer to the dead body in the grave. See our
treatment of Psalm 16:10 and the works referred to there.

Acts 2:29, 41; 3:18–19, 21

Brothers, I can tell you . . . (2:29 NIV).

And about three thousand were added to their number . . . (2:41 NIV).

God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets . . . (3:18
NIV).

That times of refreshing may come from the Lord . . . (3:19 NIV).

Through his holy prophets . . . (3:21 NIV).

Men and brethren . . . (2:29 KJV).

There were added unto them about three thousand souls (2:41 KJV).

By the mouth of all his prophets . . . (3:18 KJV).

*When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the
Lord . . .* (3:19 KJV).

By the mouth of all his holy prophets . . . (3:21 KJV).

38. *NIVSB*, n. on Acts 1:18.

Why does the NIV not include the words "men" (2:29), "souls" (2:41), "by the mouth of" (3:18, 21), and "presence" (3:19)? Do the translators not believe that the very words of Scripture are inspired?

In his commentary on the Greek text of *Acts*, F. F. Bruce has pointed out that *andres adelphoi* (2:29) is a classical Greek idiom meaning only "brethren (brothers)" (note that there is no conjunction "and" between the two words).[39] "Souls" in 2:41 simply means "people" and is adequately translated by "3,000." "By the mouth of" (3:18, 21) is also an idiom, rendered "through" in the NIV. When *prosōpon*, "presence" (3:19), is governed by prepositions, as it is here ("from"), it "can no longer be translated."[40] These verses all represent the translators' attempts to render idioms, or modes of expression, and their idiomatic translations do not discount the inspiration of Scripture.

Acts 2:38

> *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*

In the command, "Repent and be baptized . . . for the forgiveness of your sins," why did the NIV render the Greek preposition *eis* as "for" instead of "on the basis of" or "because of"? How does your understanding here affect your translation of other passages on baptism, such as Romans 6:3–5 and 1 Peter 3:21? What is baptism for, anyway?

All these passages have been hotly debated, and Greek scholars disagree. In his massive Greek grammar, A. T. Robertson listed a few references where a causal (or a "basis") meaning for *eis* may be possible (one being Acts 2:38; others are Matt. 10:41–42; 12:41).[41] Unfortunately, such a meaning is rejected in the

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39. F. F. Bruce, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), p. 76.
40. BAGD, p. 721.
41. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (New York: Doran, 1914), 389, 592; see also his *Word Pictures*, 3:35–36.

Greek lexicons—not one of them allows that nuance.[42] And alternative translations and interpretations are possible for the passages Robertson lists.[43] English versions do not normally translate Acts 2:38 "because of, on the basis of." Since baptism in New Testament times immediately followed conversion (through repentance and faith in Christ), it was natural to speak of the two together.

In Romans 6:3–5 baptism symbolizes our spiritual union and identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (note the comparison in v. 5—"like"). In 1 Peter 3:21 there is a double figure: The water of the flood symbolizes baptism, and baptism in turn symbolizes salvation. As the end of verse 21 indicates, baptism saves by what it symbolizes—Christ's resurrection (cf. Rom. 4:25). What is called for in all these passages, then, is not faith in baptism but faith in the atoning death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for our redemption.

Baptism, according to Romans 6:4, is a public sign or testimony that we are now fully committed to our new life in Christ.[44] The following quotations may be helpful:

> The usual connection of the forgiveness of sins in Luke-Acts is with repentance and not with baptism at all (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 3:19; 5:31). In fact, in no other passage of Acts is baptism presented as bringing about the forgiveness of sins. If not linked with repentance, forgiveness is connected with faith (cf. 10:43; 13:38f.; 26:18). The dominant idea in 2:38 thus seems to be repentance, with the other elements following. Repentance leads to baptism, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Spirit. The essential response Peter called for from the Jewish crowd was a complete turnabout that comprises true repentance, to turn away from their rejection of the Messiah and to call upon his name, receive baptism into his community, and share the gift of the Spirit they had just witnessed so powerfully at work in the Christians at Pentecost.[45]

> It would, of course, be a mistake to link the words "unto the remission of your sins" with the command "be baptized" to the ex-

42. See BAGD, A–S, and LS.
43. Cf. *NIDNTT*, 3:1187, 1208–9.
44. For further explanation, see *NIVSB* n. on Rom. 6:3–4.
45. John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 117.

clusion of the prior command "Repent ye." It is against the whole genius of Biblical religion to suppose that any outward rite had any value except in so far as it was accompanied by true repentance within. In a similar passage in the following chapter, the blotting out of the people's sins is a direct consequence of their repenting and turning to God (3:19); nothing is said there about baptism, although it is no doubt implied (the idea of an unbaptized Christian is simply not entertained in NT). So too the reception of the Spirit here is associated not with baptism in itself but with baptism as the visible token of repentance.[46]

Acts 3:26

When God raised up his servant . . . (NIV).
Having raised up his Son Jesus . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "his servant" instead of "his Son Jesus" (KJV)?

The Greek word here can mean "servant" or "Son." Most scholars prefer "servant" for this context. The name *Jesus*, on the other hand, is not found here in any of the earliest manuscripts.

Acts 4:27, 30

Against your holy servant Jesus . . . (4:27 NIV).
The name of your holy servant Jesus . . . (4:30 NIV).

Against thy holy child Jesus . . . (4:27 KJV).
The name of thy holy child Jesus . . . (4:30 KJV).

Why does the NIV read "servant" instead of "child" (KJV)?

The Greek word can mean "servant," "child," or "son." Most interpreters prefer "servant" for this context.[47]

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46. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, NICNT, 77.
47. See *NIVSB* n. on Acts 3:13.

Acts 6:3

Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom . . . (NIV).

But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation . . . (NASB).

Why was the phrase "of good reputation" (NASB) omitted?

"Of good reputation" is literally "to whom testimony is borne." When combined with the following words, the translators believed that the sense was "to whom testimony is borne that they are full of the Spirit and wisdom." This was then translated "who are *known to be* full of the Spirit and wisdom." "Known to be" would speak of a good reputation.

Acts 8:37

Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" . . . (NIV *footnote*).

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (KJV).

Where is this verse in the NIV?

It is in the footnote. It is not attested, however, in any of the early Greek manuscripts and papyri.

Acts 9:5–6

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (NIV).

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do (KJV).

What happened to Jesus' words at the end of verse 5, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (KJV), and to Paul's question at the beginning of verse 6, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (KJV)?

Neither of these is found here in any Greek manuscript, but they do appear in some Old Latin and Vulgate manuscripts plus a few other non-Greek sources. Apparently thinking that the words had become lost from the Greek text by accident, Erasmus translated them back into Greek from the Latin Vulgate and incorporated them into his 1516 edition of the Greek New Testament. Thus they came to form part of the Textus Receptus and so part of the KJV. Both Jesus' words and Paul's question were probably added to the Old Latin and Vulgate manuscripts from Acts 26:14 and 22:10 respectively, where they occur with strong support from Greek manuscripts, and so the NIV has them at those places.

Acts 15:34

> *But Silas decided to remain there . . .* (NIV *footnote*).
> *Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still* (KJV).

Where is this verse in the NIV?

It is in the footnote, but it is absent from all the early Greek manuscripts and papyri.

Acts 16:18

> *At that moment the spirit left her . . .* (NIV).
> *And he came out the same hour . . .* (KJV).

Why does the NIV have "at that moment" instead of "the same hour" (KJV)?

Here the word *hour* is not to be understood literally (in the sense of 60 minutes). Rather, in this context it clearly implies immediacy, as it does also in 22:13; Luke 2:38; 20:19; 24:33.

Acts 17:26

From one man he made every nation of men . . . (NIV).
And hath made of one blood all nations . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV not have "one blood" (KJV)?

None of the earliest Greek manuscripts and papyri reads "blood."

Acts 24:7

But the commander, Lysias, came and with the use of much force snatched him from our hands (NIV *footnote*).

What happened to this verse?

It is included in our footnote, but verses 6b–8a do not appear in any of the earliest Greek manuscripts and papyri.

Acts 28:29

After he said this, the Jews left, arguing vigorously among them-selves (NIV *footnote*).

Where is this verse in the NIV?

It is in the footnote, but it is absent from the earliest Greek manuscripts and other ancient witnesses.

3

Questions on
the Epistles and Revelation

Romans 3:25

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement . . . (NIV).
Whom God hath set forth to be *a propitiation . . .* (KJV).

Why did the NIV translate the Greek word *hilastērion*[1] as "sacrifice of atonement" instead of "propitiation" (KJV)?[2]

First, the NIV was trying for something clearer for the average person in the congregation; only a few theologically informed church people would understand "propitiation." Second, with the combination "as a sacrifice of atonement" (main text) and "as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away sin" (footnote), the NIV has one of the most complete, clear, and accurate presentations of the biblical concept of propitiation available in any translation.

Romans 7:5

For when we were controlled by the sinful nature . . . (NIV).
For when we were in the flesh . . . (KJV).

Why did you translate the Greek word *sarx* as "sinful nature" instead of "flesh" here and in other references in Paul's letters?

1. Cf. Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.
2. Martin (p. 30), Radmacher (pp. 666–68), and John Skilton (*WTJ* 37 [Winter 1975]: 260) are all critical of this NIV rendering.

The problem is that *sarx* is used with both physical and figurative meanings. For the former, "flesh" or "body" is satisfactory for most contexts. For the figurative sense of *sarx*, the most common translation in the NIV is "sinful nature." Not all scholars will agree with this figurative rendering, so the NIV provides footnotes with the alternative (more "literal") translation, "flesh," leaving the reader free to judge the proper interpretation.[3] Ronald Youngblood, one of our Committee on Bible Translation members, has written:

> To render the Greek word *sarx* by "flesh" virtually every time it appears does not require the services of a translator; all one needs is a dictionary (or, better yet, a computer). But to recognize that *sarx* has differing connotations in different contexts, that in addition to "flesh" it often means "human standards" or "earthly descent" or "sinful nature" or "sexual impulse" or "person," etc., and therefore to translate *sarx* in a variety of ways, is to understand that translation is not only a mechanical, word-for-word process but also a nuanced thought-for-thought procedure. . . . Word-for-word translations typically demonstrate great respect for the source language (in this case ancient Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) but often pay only lip service to the requirements of the target language (in this case contemporary English).[4]

Romans 8:1

Who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit . . . (NIV *footnote*).

Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit . . . (KJV).

Why is the last part of this verse ("who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit") missing from the NIV (cf. the KJV)?

It is in a footnote. Since the earliest Greek manuscripts do not have this reading, most scholars believe that a later

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3. Martin (pp. 32–33) reads too much into the word *nature* (certainly more than we intended). After all, John Murray, whom he quotes with approval, defines "flesh" as "sinful human nature" (*Romans*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965], 279).

4. Ronald Youngblood, *The Standard* (November 1988): 18.

copyist inserted it here from verse 4, where it belongs be-
cause of solid support in all the manuscripts and ancient
witnesses.

Romans 8:3

And so he condemned sin in sinful man.

Since the last occurrence of *sarx* in this verse may refer to
Christ's flesh or body, why translate it "in sinful man" here?

The NIV supplies the alternative rendering, "in the flesh," in
the footnote. The *NIVSB* explains that

> "flesh" may refer to man's flesh or to Christ's. If the latter, it
> states where God condemned sin, namely, in Christ's human (but
> not sinful) nature—the interpretation that seems more consis-
> tent with Paul's teaching.[5]

Romans 13:8

*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love
one another . . .* (NIV).
Owe no man any thing, but to love one another . . . (KJV).

Why is the beginning of this verse so different from the KJV?

Some argue that no one should ever incur a debt of any
kind for any reason. They attempt to justify such an ideal by
quoting the KJV rendering of this verse: "Owe no man any
thing." The NIV translation of the present tense of the Greek
verb here is clearer and more accurate: "Let no debt remain
outstanding." Everett F. Harrison's commentary on Romans
provides a good, balanced treatment of this latter rendering:

> This translation has the advantage of avoiding the danger of giv-
> ing a wrong impression, such as might be conveyed by "Owe no

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5. *NIVSB*, n. on 8:3; this view is further supported by Douglas Moo, *Romans
1–8*, WEC (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 512–13, and by many others.

man anything." If incurring any indebtedness whatever is contrary to God's will, the Lord would not have said, "Do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you" (Matt. 5:42). On the other hand, to be perpetually in debt is not a good testimony for a believer, and to refuse to make good one's obligations is outrageous. Now comes the exception to the rule. There is a "continuing debt to love one another." One can never say that he has completely discharged it.[6]

Romans 16:23

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works . . . (NIV).

Erastus, the city treasurer greets you . . . (NASB).

Which is correct—"director of public works" (NIV) or "treasurer" (NASB)?

The Greek word used here is a very general one meaning simply "steward, manager, director." It does not mean specifically either "director of public works" or "treasurer." One must determine the precise nuance, or area of responsibility, from the context or from what we know from archaeology and history. Our best archaeological and historical evidence from Corinth indicates that Erastus was the city's "director (or, commissioner) of public works."[7]

Romans 16:24

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen (NIV *footnote*).

What happened to this verse?

While we have it in the footnote, it is not found in any of the earliest Greek manuscripts and papyri.

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6. Everett F. Harrison, "Romans," in *EBC* (1976), 10:140–41.
7. See *NIVSB* n. on v. 23.

1 Corinthians 3:1

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly . . . (NIV).

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal . . . (KJV).

Why did you translate the Greek word *sarkinos* as "worldly" instead of "carnal" or "fleshly"?

The translators struggled with this verse. The majority of the Committee on Bible Translation did not believe that "carnal" or "fleshly" would clearly communicate the correct sense in truly contemporary English idiom, whereas "worldly" would. The point of this passage in context is to explain why many fail to apprehend true wisdom (see 2:9). The reason is that such wisdom is perceived by the spiritual (mature) Christian (2:14–16; cf. 2:6). The Corinthians, however, were worldly believers (3:1–4), and the proof of their worldliness and immaturity was their division over human leaders (3:3–4). Through such divisions they were behaving like mere men (3:3), that is, like men of the world instead of men of God. They were following merely human (worldly) standards.

1 Corinthians 7:1

It is good for a man not to marry . . . (NIV).
It is good for a man not to touch a woman . . . (KJV).

Instead of "It is good for a man not to marry," why did the NIV translators not use a literal rendering: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (KJV)?

We thought the literal rendering would only confuse, rather than clarify, the meaning. The sentence does not literally mean "It is good for a man not to *touch* a woman." The meaning, instead, is that because of the crisis at Corinth (v. 26), it is good for a man not to marry. A footnote, however, offers this alternative translation: "'It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.'" The *NIVSB* here explains:

Another possible interpretation is that Paul is . . . quoting a slogan of the Corinthians. . . . He refutes this idea in v. 2 by stating that sexual relations have their proper expression in marriage.[8]

1 Corinthians 11:4–7

Every man who prays or prophesies with long hair dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with no covering of hair on her head dishonors her head—she is just like one of the "shorn women." If a woman has no covering, let her be for now with short hair, but since it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair shorn or shaved, she should grow it again. A man ought not to have long hair (NIV *footnote*).

Is there any evidence for the alternative translation in the NIV footnote?

Discussions of "hair" as a viable option in place of "head covering (veil or shawl)" appear in several commentaries and articles, and a few reputable scholars do hold this view.[9]

1 Corinthians 11:10

The woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head . . . (NIV).

For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels . . . (KJV).

Why did the NIV translators render the Greek word *exousia* as "sign of authority" instead of simply "authority" or "power" (KJV)?

8. *NIVSB*, n. on 1 Cor. 7:1; for probable analogies to this disputation or quotation-rebuttal approach elsewhere in this same book, see the *NIVSB* nn. on 6:12–13, 18.

9. E.g., see discussions in W. Harold Mare, "1 Corinthians," in *EBC* (1976), 10:255; F. W. Grosheide, *I Corinthians*, NICNT (1953), 251–56; James B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils (or) the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2–16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b–36," *WTJ* 35 (1973): 193–200; Thomas R. Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991), 125–27.

We regarded *exousia* as an ellipsis or pregnant (filled with significance or implication) grammatical construction whose meaning must be filled out for clarity. It could also be classified as a figure of speech—specifically, a metonymy in which "authority" is put for sign (or symbol) of authority, that is, veil, shawl, or other covering. The RSV, NRSV, GNB, JB, NJB, NASB, NKJV, NEB, and REB all basically say the same thing as the NIV.

1 Corinthians 11:16

We have no other practice . . . (NIV).

We have no such custom . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV have "other" instead of "such"?

The Greek text here can be understood as meaning either (1) "we have no *such* practice" (i.e., no such practice of being contentious), or (2) "we have no *other* practice" (i.e., no other practice than the one outlined in vv. 3–15). We prefer the latter for this context.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4

Now about spiritual gifts . . . There are different kinds of gifts. . . .

Why does the NIV use "gifts" for both *pneumatika* (v. 1) and *charismata* (v. 4), thus failing to distinguish between them?

Based on the context of chapters 12–14, the majority of English Bible versions, Greek lexicons, commentaries, and so on, understand both terms as referring to spiritual gifts. The distinction is that *pneumatika* stresses that such gifts are produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit, while *charismata* emphasizes that they are gifts of God's sovereign grace.

1 Corinthians 13:8–11

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowl-

edge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

Why was the NIV not more consistent in its handling of the voice of certain Greek verbs and in its translation of the same Greek words (e.g., in v. 8 "cease" and "pass away" translate the same Greek word)?

The fine lines of distinction drawn by some in this passage are not supported by most Greek lexicons and exegetical commentaries. Nonetheless the Committee on Bible Translation is scheduled to review this passage.[10]

Galatians 5:12

As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves! . . . (NIV).

I would they were even cut off which trouble you. . . . (KJV).

Which is correct—"emasculate (or castrate)" or "cut off" (KJV)?

The Greek verb used here can mean either "to cut off" or "to castrate." As in Philippians 3:2, Paul is using sarcasm and a wordplay here (see v. 11) against legalistic false teachers who have so distorted the true meaning of circumcision that it had become nothing more than a useless cutting of the flesh. Most commentators agree with the "castration" view.

Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . (NIV).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . (KJV).

10. In the meantime, see Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 643–47.

Why does the NIV have "Praise be to" instead of "Blessed be" (KJV)?[11]

The English verb *bless* is commonly used of the action of a superior toward an inferior (cf. Heb. 7:7). To avoid the notion of an inferior (humans) "blessing" the superior (God), we use "praise" most of the time when God is the object.[12] It is true that the English word *bless* can also sometimes connote "praise," but this is an uncommon usage today.

Philippians 1:16–17

The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains (NIV).

The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel (KJV).

Why are these verses in reverse order (cf. KJV)?

The KJV order does not appear in any Greek manuscripts earlier than the sixth century.[13] Regardless of the sequence, the ultimate meaning of the passage is the same.

Colossians 1:14

In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (NIV).

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (KJV).

Why is the phrase "through his blood" missing (see KJV)? Are the NIV translators attempting to depreciate Christ's blood?

11. There are numerous references in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

12. BDB, pp. 138–39, "adore with bended knees," "praise of God," and BAGD, p. 322, "speak well of, praise, extol," concur.

13. The problem is discussed by, e.g., Homer A. Kent, Jr., "Philippians," in *EBC* (1978), 11:113; Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, WEC (1988), 74.

First, as indicated by the NIV footnote, only a few late Greek manuscripts have "through his blood." So a later copyist probably inserted the phrase here from Ephesians 1:7, where the reading is clearly genuine with strong manuscript support. Second, if we were attempting to depreciate Christ's blood, we would not have retained the reference to His blood in Ephesians 1:7, as well as in numerous other passages.[14]

Colossians 4:10

As does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas . . . (NIV).

And Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas . . . (KJV).

Which is correct—"cousin" or "nephew" (KJV: "sister's son")?

The Greek word here *(anepsios)* was understood in the sense of "nephew" by the KJV translators, but we now know that the Greek word did not take on that meaning until after the New Testament period. During the New Testament period, it meant "cousin."[15] The same Greek word was also used in the LXX rendering of Numbers 36:11 ("cousins").

1 Thessalonians 4:4

That each of you should learn to control his own body . . . (NIV).

That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "to control his own body" instead of "to possess his vessel" (KJV), which leaves the passage open for a reference to "wife"?

We have adequately helped the reader by providing three possible meanings for the verb: "control" (main text), "live with" (footnote), and "acquire" (footnote). Two are given for the noun: "body" (main text) and "wife" (footnote).

14. See Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III, *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), s.v.

15. BAGD, p. 66; Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon,* NAC (1991), 328, n. 4.

1 Timothy 2:2

That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (NIV).

That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (KJV).

Why does the NIV use "holiness" instead of "honesty" (KJV)?

The Greek word used here *(semnotēs)* can mean "reverence, dignity, seriousness, respectfulness, holiness, probity."[16] Today "holiness" is more accurate than "honesty," which reflects an archaic nuance no longer associated with holiness.

1 Timothy 2:7

And a teacher of true faith to the Gentiles (NIV).

A teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity (KJV).

What happened to the word *truth* here (KJV: "verity")?

We understood "faith and truth" as a hendiadys, which is two nouns linked by *and* to express the same idea as a noun with an adjective ("true faith").

1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7

Not given to drunkenness . . . (1 Tim. 3:3 NIV).

Not given to drunkenness . . . (Titus 1:7 NIV).

Not given to wine . . . (1 Tim. 3:3 KJV).

Not given to wine . . . (Titus 1:7 KJV).

Why does the NIV have "not given to drunkenness" instead of "not given to wine" (KJV)?

The Greek word used here *(paroinos)* means "drunken, addicted to wine."[17] In *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testa-*

16. BAGD, p. 747.
17. BAGD, p. 629.

ment, the authors define it as "one who sits long at his wine, one who is a slave of drink."[18]

1 Timothy 3:16

> *He appeared in a body . . .* (NIV).
>
> *God was manifest in the flesh . . .* (KJV).

Why does the NIV read "He" instead of "God" (KJV)? Are you denigrating Jesus' deity?

No major Greek manuscript earlier than the eighth or ninth century reads "God." All the ancient versions concur.[19] Compare the treatments of John 1:18 and Luke 2:33, 43 above.

Hebrews 9:3–4

> *Called the Most Holy Place which had the golden altar of incense . . .* (NIV).
>
> *Called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer . . .* (KJV).

Which is correct—"golden altar of incense" or "golden censer" (KJV)? It would seem that the NIV choice contradicts the Old Testament location of the altar of incense.

The Greek here means "golden altar of incense"; however, the language of this verse is probably influenced by ceremonial function rather than by physical location (see Exod. 30:6; 40:5). In other words, the Most Holy Place is described as having the golden altar of incense because of the close association of the altar with the Most Holy Place in the Day of Atonement ritual. At that time, the high priest took burning incense from the altar of incense into the Most Holy Place so that the smoke from it would cover the "mercy seat" and protect him from death (Lev. 16:12–14).

18. Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament,* trans., rev., and ed. Cleon L. Rogers, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976–80), 2:276.
19. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary,* 641.

Hebrews 10:25

Let us not give up meeting together . . . (NIV).

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV render the Greek participle as a finite verb ("Let us not give up") versus the KJV's "Not forsaking"?

Most specialists in New Testament Greek syntax acknowledge that verbal participles may take on the force of the accompanying main (finite) verb. Therefore it is perfectly proper to translate verse 25 "Let us not give up" as a follow-through from "And let us consider" in verse 24.[20]

Hebrews 11:11

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father . . . (NIV).

By faith even Sarah, who was past age, was enabled to bear children . . . (NIV footnote).

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed . . . (KJV).

Why is the NIV here so different from the KJV?

As the footnote indicates, the meaning of the Greek text of this verse is uncertain and may indicate that Sarah was enabled rather than Abraham. In the main text, the words "and Sarah herself was barren" are to be understood parenthetically (as indicated by the dashes).[21] Bruce points out that the major problem is that the Greek phrase for "to conceive seed" (KJV) does not mean that. Instead, it refers to the father's role in the generative process. A literal translation would be "for depositing sperm," thus more likely referring to Abraham.[22]

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20. Similarly, Eph. 5:18ff.; see our treatment of Matt. 28:19–20 above.

21. F. F. Bruce's fine commentary on *Hebrews* (NICNT [1964], 299–302 and notes) explains why we made Abraham the subject in the main text and Sarah in the footnote, though Bruce suggests still another way of working Sarah into the sentence.

22. Ibid.

1 Peter 1:20

He was chosen before the creation of the world . . . (NIV).

For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world . . . (NASB).

Why does the NIV read "chosen" instead of "foreknown" (NASB)?

The Greek verb *proginōskō* can mean not only to "know" something "beforehand," but also to "choose" someone "beforehand," and the lexicons favor the latter in this verse.[23]

1 Peter 3:18

He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

Why does the NIV translate *pneumati* as "by the Spirit" instead of "in the [Christ's] spirit"?[24]

We have provided the alternative in the footnote. The NIV main text agrees with several other English versions, including the KJV.

1 Peter 4:6

For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead . . . (NIV).

For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV add the word *now*?

The *NIVSB* explains:

This preaching was a past event. The word "now" does not occur in the Greek, but it is necessary to make it clear that the preaching was done not after these people had died, but while they were

23. BAGD, p. 703; see also *TDNT*, 1:715.
24. John H. Skilton criticizes the NIV for not maintaining the parallel construction, "in the body . . . in the spirit" (*WTJ* 37 [Winter 1975]: 260).

still alive. (There will be no opportunity for people to be saved after death; see Heb. 9:27.)[25]

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief . . . (NIV).

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV have just "thief" instead of "thief in the night" (KJV)?

The phrase "in the night" is not attested here in any of the early Greek manuscripts and papyri. Those manuscripts do have the phrase in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, and so does the NIV. In fact, a later copyist probably inserted the phrase in 2 Peter 3:10 from 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

1 John 3:9

No one who is born of God will continue to sin . . . he cannot go on sinning . . . (NIV).

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . he cannot sin . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV translate the Greek present tense of the verb as "continue to sin," and "go on sinning"?[26]

Standard reference works on Greek grammar and syntax recognize durative action as a possible syntactical use of the present tense. The present tense does not connote durative action everywhere, but to deny the possibility of such a syntactical use of the present tense anywhere is extreme. What the transla-

25. *NIVSB*, n. on v. 6; see further, among others, Edwin A. Blum, "1 Peter," in *EBC* (1981), 12:245 and n.

26. Radmacher, 79–82, criticizes the NIV for resorting to the "tense solution" to the interpretative problem here instead of following the more natural "absolute/ideal solution." He gives the misleading impression that the NIV approach is now passé. Indeed, he comes close to denying the durative force of the Greek present tense as a viable or valid option at all.

tor and exegete should do is to consider the syntactical possibilities and select the most appropriate one for a given context. That is all the NIV has done in its translation of "sin."

The translation provides a satisfactory solution to the interpretative or theological problem in these passages, and it also matches the realities of human experience more closely.[27]

1 John 3:10

Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God . . . (NIV).

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God . . . (NKJV).

Does the NIV promote the idea that if on any occasion one does not do what is right, one is not a child of God? Why was the word *child* added?[28]

The words "who *does not do* what is right" can just as easily be understood to mean "who does not *continue* to do what is right" or "who does not *practice* what is right"—particularly in the context of "No one who is born of God will *continue* to sin" and "he cannot *go on* sinning, because he has been born of God" (v. 9; emphasis mine). And if one asks why verse 10 was not so rendered, the answer is that it would be poor English to continue in that same vein *ad infinitum*. It is also unnecessary because the stage has already been set for it in verse 9 (see above), much as one might set the stage for previous action with the past perfect (e.g., "had gone"), then continue with the simple past (e.g., "went") to avoid endless repetition.

The idea of "child" is strongly implied in the immediate context—in fact, within the same verse: "This is how we know who the *children* of God are and who the *children* of the devil are" (emphasis mine). In the context of the first part of the verse, "of God" almost certainly means "a *child* of God" or "*born* of God

27. Gordon R. Lewis argues that when more than one interpretation is possible, the preferred view is the one that explains the greatest amount of relevant evidence with the fewest difficulties ("Biblical Evidence for Pretribulationism," *Bib. Sac.* 125 [July–September 1968]: 226).

28. These questions come from a widely circulated ad by Thomas Nelson Publishers praising the NKJV and criticizing the NIV.

(= a *child* of God)."[29] "One born of God" is synonymous with "child of God," as Donald W. Burdick has explained (transliteration mine):

> The phrase *ek tou theou,* "of God," occurs several times in this epistle. In addition to its appearance in 3:10, it occurs six times in 4:1–6. The key to its meaning is found in 3:9–10 where it is clearly parallel with *gegennēmenos ek tou theou,* "born of God." Dodd says that the shorter expression appears to be "a briefer synonym" for the longer one. Thus the idea of being born of God is found at the beginning (2:29–3:10) and at the end (4:1–6) of this major section of the epistle.[30]

1 John 5:7b–8a

For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement . . . (NIV).

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth . . . (KJV).

Why does the NIV not include the additional words at the end of verse 7 and the beginning of verse 8 (see KJV)?

The extra words in the KJV rendering of this passage are among the most poorly attested of all the disputed verses in the KJV and Textus Receptus. The addition is not found in any Greek manuscript or English translation until the sixteenth century, and most scholars agree that it is a forgery.[31]

1 John 5:18

The one who was born of God keeps him safe . . .

29. Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament,* rev. Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody, 1958), 4:471.

30. Donald W. Burdick, *The Letters of John the Apostle* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 249; cf. p. 252.

31. One can read the story about it in Earle, "The Rationale for an Eclectic New Testament Text," 56–57, or in Metzger, *Textual Commentary,* pp. 715–17, or in Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament,* pp. 101–2.

Why does the NIV read "the one who was born of God [referring to Christ] keeps him [the believer] safe"?

Donald W. Burdick builds a strong case in support of the NIV choice here. His main reasons are: (1) The tense changes from "is born" to "was born." (2) When John designates believers as "born of God" in 1 John, he always uses the Greek perfect participle; here he uses the aorist tense. (3) The concept of the believer keeping himself (KJV) is not taught elsewhere in the Bible. So God's Son is the one who keeps the believer from harm by Satan.[32]

Revelation 22:19

God will take away from him his share in the tree of life . . . (NIV).
God shall take away his part out of the book of life . . . (KJV).

Which is correct—"tree of life" or "book of life" (KJV)?

Since only a few late Greek manuscripts read "book of life," the translation "tree of life" is preferred. The KJV translators apparently followed the Latin Vulgate rather than Greek manuscript evidence.

32. Burdick, 392–93, 404–5.

Conclusion

The 150 examples in this book (50 from the OT, 100 from the NT) should demonstrate the overall accuracy and balance in the interpretations involved in the NIV renderings of specific passages. Does this mean that the NIV is perfect? No, it does not. No translation is perfect, for they are all made by imperfect people. Nevertheless one advantage of using the NIV is that, in spite of its imperfections, most expositors will likely experience the pleasant surprise that they are devoting less time to correcting and clarifying the text than would be the case if they were using some other English Bible.

Yet another advantage of using the NIV is that it is in an ongoing review process. This means that although the text is basically established, not all renderings are "engraved in rock forever," to borrow Job's words (Job 19:24). We are open to achieving an even better balance in our translations. If the reader has a problem with our rendering of a particular verse and has strong feelings about the matter, he or she may submit a suggestion or proposal to the IBS address. CBT will consider it.

Finally, as I have written elsewhere about God's wonderful Word:

> The writer heartily commends to today's minister a ministry of the Word of God.
>> Study it diligently,
>> Believe it implicitly,
>> Obey it completely,
>> *Expound it faithfully!*[11]

I would only add now: *Translate it correctly*, that is, with the best *balance* between faithfulness to the original languages *and* faithfulness to the English language. Such a *balanced* approach is the surest path to *accuracy* in translation.

Appendix 1

The NIV and Homosexual and Lesbian Practices

Some have claimed that the NIV condones sodomy (i.e., homosexual sins). The alleged reason for this is that some NIV translators and editors were homosexuals or lesbians. These charges have no basis in fact.

Here are the facts. In the earliest stages of translation work on the NIV (in the early 1970s), Virginia Mollenkott was consulted briefly and only in a minor way on matters of English style. At that time she had the reputation of being a committed Evangelical Christian with expertise in contemporary English idiom and usage. Nothing was known of her lesbian views, which did not begin to surface until years later in some of her writings. If we had known in the early 1970s what became public knowledge only years later, we would not have consulted her at all. But it must be stressed that she did not influence the NIV translators and editors in any of their final decisions.

It is also asserted that the NIV allows for homosexual and lesbian practices because it translates "sodomites" as "male shrine prostitutes" in 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7. This is simply a problem of arriving at the correct meaning of the Hebrew word *qādēsh* (plural *qĕdēshîm*). Apparently the KJV/AV translators thought it meant "sodomites (= homosexuals)," so they rendered it that way. Today, as modern commentaries and Hebrew lexicons indicate, we know that it means "male shrine prostitutes." There is also a feminine form of the same Hebrew word that means "female shrine prostitutes." Such religious prostitution was a prominent feature of the pagan immoral "worship" of the Canaanite fertility gods and goddesses.

Homosexual and lesbian practices are condemned just as clearly and strongly in the NIV as in any other English version. See the NIV renderings in Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:10; Jude 7.

Appendix 2

The NIV:
A New Age Version?

Some are charging that the NIV is a New Age version. This claim apparently originated in the KJV/AV-only camp under the influence of G. A. Riplinger's recent book, *New Age Bible Versions*. Believe it or not, according to her, all Bible versions other than the KJV are New Age versions!

Fortunately, all I need to do by way of response is to quote at length from contemporary Christian apologist James White's review of Riplinger's book:

> [It seems to be Riplinger's view that] anyone who opposes [her] unique view of the world and theology is, in fact, a New Ager in sheep's clothing.

> I have only once or twice encountered a work that contained more misrepresentation of historical facts, cited source of documentation, and the writings of those who are being reviewed. *New Age Bible Versions* shows not the slightest concern for accurately representing its opposition. Context is a term that is utterly lost in the maze of disconnected, disjointed citations thrown at the reader on almost every page. Utterly illogical argumentation carries the day in Gail's attempt to find a New Age conspiracy behind every bush.

> Take Gail Riplinger's book . . . and then take the time to find such books as Barker's *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, Palmer's *The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, and John Kohlenberger's *Words about the Word*, and examine the references provided at the end of the book. The number of complete mis-citations and altered quotations will quickly prove the correctness of my statements.

> The modern versions are unashamedly misrepresented in place after place by the convenient use of punctuation.

> Over and over again the arguments that are put forward could easily be turned around and used against the KJV and Mrs. Riplinger's position.

> Double standards are rampant throughout the book.

It seems that as long as someone had anything at all to do with the production of the NIV, it is fair game to not only impugn their character, but to misrepresent their words.

Yet the book is filled from cover to cover with such misrepresentation and wild imagination.

The book is one long misrepresentation from the preface to the index.

New Age Bible Versions is a book that illustrates clearly the lengths to which people will go to prove "conspiracies."

To all of the above I say Amen! Using Riplinger's approach, one could "prove" anything. She deliberately employs deception in an attempt to influence her readers to distrust the modern English translations of the Bible and to persuade them to use nothing but the KJV. Her book contains numerous misrepresentations of the truth (from cover to cover). I support White's suggestion above to take the book, *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (available from the International Bible Society), compare Riplinger's frequent quotations from it with the quoted materials in their original contexts, and see whether one agrees with the meanings she assigns to them. Time after time one will discover the validity of White's charge of misrepresentation. Finally, she also maligns the good names and reputations of many of our finest conservative-Evangelical scholars.

(White's complete review may be obtained from Alpha and Omega Ministries, P.O. Box 37106, Phoenix, AZ 85069. His book, *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust The Modern Translations?* is even more helpful [see Bibliography]. See now also *Baptist Biblical Heritage* 5/1 [April 1994], which contains no less than six articles and book reviews dealing with KJV Onlyism, Riplinger and her book *New Age Bible Versions*, Peter Ruckman, Jack Chick of Chick Publications, Texe Marrs, and others. This can be obtained from Editor Bob Ross, *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, P.O. Box 66, Pasadena, TX 77501–0066.)

Appendix 3

The Best Greek Text of the New Testament

Readers will be helped in determining the best Greek text of the NT by this unpublished summary of the situation by my esteemed friend and former colleague, Dr. S. Lewis Johnson:

> I am frequently asked my opinion of the Textus Receptus and why I do not regard this text as the primary text-type in view of its majority status. This is a large subject, but I would suggest that the following things lead me to give that family no higher rating than that of *an independent text-type.*
>
> (1) First, the Byzantine *text* (not readings) does not exist in history before the time of Chrysostom (Westcott and Hort dated its recension at about A.D. 310; Chrysostom's dates are A.D. 347–407).
>
> (2) Second, the evidence of the *fathers* and the *versions* points away from the primary character of the Byzantine text.
>
> (3) Third, the *age* of the manuscripts we have, among the earliest of which there are *none* that are Byzantine, creates a strong presumption that the autographa are to be found among them. The presumption of the majority of manuscripts (cf. Hodges) is canceled by this. At A.D. 400, for example, the "majority" rests with the minority families.
>
> (4) Fourth, the claim that the Textus Receptus type of text has been *preserved providentially* as the true text of God's people through the ages is not valid. It was not the text of the early church in Egypt, nor in Palestine, nor in the West. Jerome, using the available Greek manuscripts and the Old Latin, gave Western Christians the Vulgate, a text much closer to the Alexandrian text-type than to the Textus Receptus. And the Christians of the West certainly had just as much a claim to be the people of God as did those of Constantinople.
>
> (5) Fifth, the Textus Receptus type of text itself is not a uniform text. For example, Colwell has identified "families" among these very cursives that are supposed to be directly descended from the autographa (cf. Acts 20:28). The lack of consensus among the cursives in Revelation is the

most obvious example of this. What becomes, then, of the argument from providence?

(6) Sixth, it is claimed that the *extant early manuscripts have survived because they were not used.* This is refuted by the glosses and notes in the margins of these manuscripts, as well as by the numbers of scribes who have worked over them. We have such notations in p^{66} and p^{75}, a child even using the latter for a workbook once—*but only once!* Vaticanus has been the object of the work of two correctors and Sinaiticus of seven distinguishable hands.

(7) Seventh, the claim that the Alexandrian text-type, or modern critical editions which largely follow this text-type, have played down the deity of Christ is hardly true. When one looks at the critical editions on John 1:18, Acts 20:28 (the Alexandrian's "God" is clearer than certain of the Byzantine manuscripts here) and others, it is evident that this charge is not accurate.

To conclude, may we not advance the claim that God in His providence has allowed us to recover the early Alexandrian type of manuscripts to enable us to come to a clearer text? To discover that the earliest of our New Testament manuscripts, such as p^{46}, p^{66} and p^{75}, give us essentially the *same text as that of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus,* manuscripts later by almost two centuries, should be cause for renewed confidence in the text of such later witnesses.

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All abbreviations are explained at the front.

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